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TRAVELS & SKETCHES

TRAVELS & SKETCHES

TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH
OF

FREDERIK POULSEN
KEEPER OF THE CLASSICAL DEPARTMENT
OF THE NY CARLSBERG GLYPTOTEK
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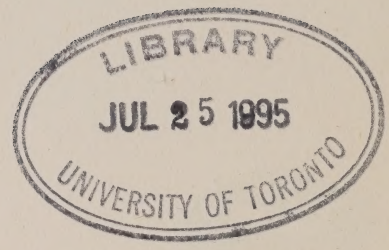

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THE COUNTRY OF MY CHILDHOOD

I

THE town at the railway-station had grown, and new houses fringed the beginning of the road; but a little farther on was the first well-known red-painted framework farmhouse, and from now onwards every boundary and every hut was a salutation and a question: 'We are the same! Are you so too?' The trees said: 'We have grown through summer rain and despite winter drizzle. Have you grown too?' Ah, what could I reply? Had the time come for such a reckoning with life as my native place urgently demanded? The one thing certain was that the dreams, which during my last stay here in my freshman's year twenty-five years ago had firm features and outlines, had not been fulfilled. The definite objects one sets before oneself one never attains, and the great fortune, the rich life, which is youth's confident expectation, also are only seldom fulfilled. But there may all the same be much to look back on thankfully, and so it is equally possible to revisit the home of one's family and one's father's farm without regret over oneself and one's life.

I walked quickly and the April sun was warming. The road was sandy and the sand laborious to trudge in. If I only had left my winter coat at the station inn! It was stupid, too, that I had not hired a conveyance! The day was hardly long enough if all my plans of revisiting were to be accomplished.

Oh, there came a vehicle rumbling down a side road! Now it turned into the main road in my

direction. I drew near it and kept step with it. The eyes of the old peasant in its single seat stared right out of his head to take in the phenomenon of a stranger in town-clothes on this lonely road.

The peasant drove slowly and took a long observation of the odd fellow who did not ask for a lift. I began to fear that his curiosity would be satisfied with inspection, when he demonstratively gathered up the reins and urged on his animals. But it was not so bad. Soon we were again side by side. Now he suddenly exclaimed: 'Won't the man get up and drive?' Yes, thank you. He drove back a dog that was sitting before the vacant seat on the bench and made room for me. Scarcely was I mounted before he began to pump me. I gave him what I thought suitable answers, asked if he knew my relatives in Flyng, and then got the conversation diverted to himself. 'Yes! A had a farm in Flyng, which A sold for 52,000 crowns two years ago. A never thought A should get more than 32,000. But had A waited till now, A should perhaps have made 152,000.'

'Yes, that was tiresome.'

'Ah, it doesn't matter so much. A sold two bits of land in 1918, and made 20,000 on the one and 30,000 on the other.'

'There will be besides big taxes you will be answerable for. I suppose the State can control the bargains.'

An indescribably crafty smile crept through his stubbly beard as he answered: 'There are very heavy expenses involved in such land-transfers.'

'Yes, indeed! So the net profit is rather difficult to reckon.'

'Yes, no one can control that.'

So we made a little calculation before I pursued the inquiry with the statement: 'Yes, folks have become rich, some as dealers in land, and some with ship shares.'

I had expected that the last remark would give him occasion to speak of the big grocer Bröste at the village by the station, whose speculations had made him a fabulous hero for the whole province. In the train a commercial traveller had talked about him to me, and with profound technical insight and freeness of detail described his way of getting on. Only think! In 1914 Bröste had begun with a working capital of 2400 crowns, and with them bought and deposited in the bank shares valued at 4000 crowns. When the value of these shares had been multiplied, Bröste, without selling, but using them as a deposit, had bought other shares in shipping. He had never sold a single share so as not to be liable to income-tax on profits, only bought whenever the time was favourable, took the dividends, paid the interest on his debt to the bank, and put the remainder into his pocket, and now his property liable to taxation amounted to 2,300,000 crowns. In these very years, when nervous speculators had bought and sold, won and lost, revelled in riches and singed their fingers, this tradesman in a provincial town of Jutland had sat steadily and safely, uninfluenced by rise and fall, and gathered in millions. But, added the commercial traveller, outwardly Bröste was unchanged, and though the

neighbouring farmers had suddenly discovered social talents in him, nothing had been able to induce him to buy a dress suit or in his way of living depart from good peasant custom.

But the peasant who was driving me knew nothing of all this, and was content with replying briefly: 'A don't understand much about shares. So A should have to ask a solicitor, and they will cheat you altogether.' After this edifying sentence of condemnation he fell into a reverie, and I thought he had forgotten about shares, when he suddenly broke the silence, 'And such a ship—it might also happen to go down.'

'Yes, it might. But it is, as a rule, insured with all the cargo. On the other hand, the steamship companies have certainly often made a large profit by insurance when an old half-rotten box went to the bottom.'

This gave occasion to fresh, still more profound meditation, and the fruit of it was a speech which, with the clearness of lightning, unveiled the baseness of his soul: 'It is probably not so easy to make such a ship go down?'

It was a sort of explanation of this utterance that later in the course of the conversation he let fall another. He had told me about a valuable horse which a few days since had suddenly fallen dead on the road, and deplored the loss.

'Then was it not insured?'

'Yes, but A get only two-thirds of its value.'

'Can't one insure a horse to its full value?'

'No, for then all the beasts in the whole of Jutland would die!'

But now I was at Flyng, and got down, thanking him.

My cousin Kresten owned the biggest farm in Flyng, and my first visit was to him. The farm buildings were newly whitewashed, and a weather-cock had been put on the barn, as in a real land-owner's seat. At a trough by the spring stood a little peasant girl of seventeen, feeding chickens out of her cotton apron. She was red-cheeked and round in the hips, and showed that the rationing of the war years had not been effective out in the country.

'Are you Kresten's daughter?'

She curtsied and said Yes. 'Father is in the fields, but mother is at home.' She talked, as they do in Jutland villages, with a slight breadth in her *v*'s and *r*'s.

I mentioned my name and asked for hers.

'Inger Johanne!'

And away hurried the little girl with the romantic name, to announce my arrival to her mother.

I went up into the hall. Furs and guns were hanging there, witnessing to prosperity and also to the fact that Kresten—certainly much against his will—had become a sportsman. It must be admitted that it was really a masterstroke of Madame Kathinka to force this weak and ease-loving man to expose himself to the fatigues of hunting merely to associate with the great. On the hall table lay spurs and riding gaiters. Kresten with a rifle, Kresten on horseback, the one seemed as improbable as the other. But Madame Kathinka was a woman with a will of her own.

I went into the front room, in old days a dismal little parlour done up in green plush, which was never used, because the family life was confined to the dining-room. Now it was a fine room, with deep cushioned arm-chairs in red, a mahogany table, a tobacco table, a writing-table. Kresten neither smoked nor wrote; but this sort of thing was now fashionable in Aalborg.

Inger Johanne came in here to find me again. 'Mother is coming immediately. Please go up into the drawing-room.'

It was the old empty big room on the other side of the hall. It was newly furnished with modern white-lacquered furniture in the style of Louis XVI. The only dark tone was given by the mahogany of the piano. There was no fire in the room, and Inger Johanne and I sat down in the white chilliness and began to talk. She was gentle and confiding, rather heavy in the country style, and had none of her mother's soft and cooing Aalborg manners.

Finally Kathinka arrived, with ruchings about her neck and wrists, with her hair slightly curled—that is why it lasted so long—dainty and fidgety, still with some of the old charm she had twenty-five years ago, so that it cost me no effort to kiss her slightly powdered cheek. 'No, that *is* funny. No, that is matchless. Kresten will be here in a minute, he just has to change his clothes.' She chattered and laughed, was dignified and youthful. There was prosperity in the house, and she herself hardly felt her age. Kresten was a little coddled, it was the kidneys and stomach, but she tried to keep him

manly and young by hunting and riding and sport. Was it not right and proper? Yes, it was, she replied for herself.

Now Kresten came in. He had become very grey. There was still the weakness about the lips, but the touch of noisiness and boastfulness which had formerly marked his character was quite gone in ill-health and subjection.

'Why, you have become a regular matador, Kresten!'

Kresten sat down chillily. But his mouth had that touch of satisfaction which I noticed everywhere in the peasants of Jutland. In these years Denmark has become a rich country, and the peasant notices his prosperity, is content without boastfulness, and of necessity consents to new arrangements at home under ever stronger pressure from his women folk.

'We of the town feel like the proletariate when we come out to you!'

There was a momentary amazement. None of them was used to hearing anybody humbly disparaging himself.

But Madame Kathinka found the explanation: 'What nonsense! We in the country have reached the level of folks in the town. Don't give yourself airs!'

We drink coffee, and meanwhile I ask about the other children, who are out in good situations, and about Kresten's three sisters, who are still living here in Flyng. Of the latter, Madame Kathinka has no good to say. Pouline was well behaved and intolerably weak in intellect; one has

never been able to associate with Rasmine, and now she has got a daughter home in shame and dishonour—ah! Inger Johanne, go out and fetch us some more cream! Inger Johanne reluctantly disappears, and while she is away I get the scandalous story of Rasmine's daughter in all its sordid details. But Rasmine did not behave any better in her youth. Oh no, to be sure! Finally there is the third sister, Karen, she is not only poor, but also evil-tempered, and will not understand that Kathinka is not bound and is not willing to get all her groceries at her shop. So neither does she visit here.

Kresten has listened without embarrassment, with nods of approval and smiles. But all this abuse gives rise to a certain dejection, which Kathinka is conscious of. 'Play something to us, Inger Johanne! Inger Johanne is learning to play: she goes into the town every Thursday. Now you shall just hear!'

Inger Johanne sits down and plays, correctly and without feeling; I hear her counting to herself at every touch; it is all purely mechanical.

'Sing a little to us, Inger Johanne! Inger Johanne sings too!'

The well-trained little Inger Johanne sings, counting the while, and Kathinka closes her eyes and rocks her head, while Kresten looks thoughtfully at the ceiling.

'You are a lucky man, Kresten,' say I to break the silence.

Kresten smiles his contented smile. But then he becomes solemn and throws out his hands:

'Ah yes! but soon will this sunbeam, too, fly from the nest.'

The picture has its special charm from the aspect of the sunbeam, weighing at least ten stones.

Now I take leave of them. The time is short, and there is much to be got through in the day.

II

KRESTEN follows me out through the door.

'Now, you must not take it ill of me, Kresten,' say I, 'but I am not at odds with your sisters, and I mean to visit them all three.'

Kresten looks back at me rather shyly. But my resolution gives him courage to say: 'Yes, it's annoying—and not as it should be. But they are also peculiar and difficult all three; and Kathinka has really put herself to inconvenience. Yes, *do* go. But I cannot go with you. I should only get taunts from them.'

With these words he goes back through the door. I have to cross part of the heath to reach Pouline's little house, bought with the remains of her share in the property when her Ivar had run through all his and had to leave the largest farm in Flyng but one. I walk quietly, but memories buzz in my head.

Pouline was my first love. I kissed her twenty-eight years ago one June evening on a load of hay, and I remember that this, the first kiss of my youth, gave me a suggestion of strawberries. But the feeling was not so lasting or so long as to trouble me, when at her wedding as a bachelor

guest I danced with her on my last visit to Flyng. Then I kissed her for the second and last time when she stood in travelling-dress out in the hall, and Ivar turned his back. Ivar was fifteen years older than she, but he had been at the high school, and was a man of big mien, and so full of quotations from Björnson that he might well overpower a simple little creature like Pouline. And so he had his good farm, and all was very good; she was in rapture, and Ivar was ready to give up all he owned at the nearest claim, and that was love. Pouline was wrapped up in Björnson's poetry before the astonished eyes of the family, and though one or two carped a little and thought Ivar silly, it was nevertheless so nice to hear, and did no harm. If he only managed his farm properly, so far as the family was concerned, he might chatter as much as he liked.

But it soon appeared that he did not do that. He was an unlucky experimenter on a large scale. After Björnson came the imitation of America. Ivar rode out in gaiters of buffalo hide and filled his pastures with unbroken horses and untethered bulls. Some years after, sheep were the only bringers of luck, and would, he said, fill the house with riches beyond dreams. All the rest of the stock was sold, and the stables and ill-kept fields were flooded with sheep. They swarmed everywhere, and Ivar declared he knew every one of them; they had such expressive faces, much more characteristic than human faces. Oh, it was all so beautiful and wonderful!

But that, too, went wrong. The sheep died and the lambs did not thrive. Adversity made Ivar ill, and people already thought he was a broken man.

But one day he turned up at a great peasant gathering, barefoot and with laughing face. Now he had discovered what gave the mind happiness and the body elasticity. He had read of the Kneipp cures, a quite excellent plan to get your whole body put in order merely by cold water and bare legs. And Ivar proclaimed his new doctrine with the enthusiasm of a prophet. But the peasants only grinned, and did not need to hide it any longer now Ivar was on the point of leaving his farm.

What all expected, happened. Pouline made valiant efforts to keep it going, but she was only a little chit, and not the woman who could lick Ivar into shape. One day they departed barefoot, and with their last money bought the crofter's house on the ling heath. There was a little peat-bog, and the three children were put to hard work, and were really the bread-winners of the family. For Ivar was once more getting a purpose in life with a sudden fresh jerk. The Evangelical Mission found in him an enthusiastic adherent and preacher. So far did he go in his fanaticism that at the farmers' feast he got up and warned them of damnation, and when the farmers ceased to invite him, he took up his position at the gable end of the assembly-room and tried to frighten the guests away from the vanity of the world and the lust of the flesh.

All this I had heard tell of, and it was with no small excitement I approached Ivar's house. I found them both in the one poor room of the cottage. There was a brick floor, a big straw double bed, a cooking-stove, a table, and two turn-up bedsteads, on which at night two children slept; the smallest boy slept on a mattress on the floor. The children were in the bog, and the parents did not offer to send for them; so I did not see them.

The reception was one of chilly indifference. Ivar was white-haired and had staring bloodshot eyes—an ecstatic old man's face, which might have tempted a Rembrandt. Fine in its perplexity and decay!

Pouline had become an old toothless woman, grey-haired and humpbacked. It was nothing but discomfort and wretchedness to rediscover the well-known features so changed. I shuddered to see the mouth which I had twice eagerly kissed. It was now as narrow as a crack in the floor, as a result of the collapse of the part between the long nose and the pointed chin. The light had gone out of those blue eyes, which I had seen grow dim in youth and innocence; they had no expression left.

While Kresten and Kathinka had felt themselves to some extent honoured by my visit, here I was received with cool contempt. How were they concerned with this worldling? What mattered it to me how their children were and what they were called?

Ten minutes passed in conversation carried on exclusively between Ivar and myself. In vain did I try to revive a few common memories. Pouline

did not even listen ; she too was living in another world.

Then—just as I was thinking of getting up and going—Ivar bent forward and suddenly asked : ' Have you realised that man is the most miserable creature that exists ? '

' The most miserable and the highest ; it is just as one takes him.'

' No, no, no ! The most miserable, weakest, most wretched, most irresolute, all without Him. When one has found God, it is right, it is as you say, then man is good and happy. Yes, assurance of the Lord's grace is the only thing, do you hear ? Oh, become His before it is too late. Oh, become His before it is too late ! Sing, Pouline, sing ! '

And Pouline struck up a hymn, with a cracked voice which made one half-laugh and half-weep. It was the second time in the day I got music by counting. But a thousand times rather Inger Johanne's well-timed school exercises on the piano than this sight of one's youthful love praising the Lord, ruined in voice, body and soul.

Again I crossed the heath. Now I had to find Rasmine's home, but as she was married to the rural postman it was not so difficult. Of the sisters Rasmine had always been most strange to me. You could not imagine any one more reserved and hostile. Her sluggish peasant ill-will had made all conversation impossible. She was generally brusque to people, and when she got engaged to the postman she covered it up as a disgrace, and so difficult was it for her to confess her feelings that she was ' far gone ' before the family finally took the matter

up and got them married. It was said that the postman had long repented his false step and would gladly have avoided the marriage which the family insisted on. It was credible enough. Most could in any case better understand terror of Rasmine than indiscretion with her—it was equally mysterious how it had come about that Rasmine let herself be tempted, and how she could be moved to any graciousness. Rasmine and her daughter were hard at work in the garden, and both got up. The mother came forward to meet me. Her face wore the same mask of reserve as twenty-five years ago, her figure was as small and lean, but she was rather paler, and quite grey-haired.

I greeted them and told of my visit to Ivar.

'Yes, Ivar and Pouline are both equally idiotic!'

'And Kresten and Kathinka! How do you get on with them?'

'A don't care about the stuck-up trash!' The daughter had approached, heavy and oppressed. Rasmine gave a significant gesture with her right hand, and said in a hard voice: 'Yes, that's the state of things we have here.'

The young girl put her apron before her eyes: 'Ah, Mother, can't you all let me alone?' And, sobbing, she ran in.

I blamed the mother and pitied the poor girl, but Rasmine's face was as hard as a stone: 'A have had it worse in my life than she. And A live still!' As the big speculator at the village by the station had immovably retained his peasant mind and customs in prosperity, so stood she, this bird of ill-omen in her black frock, a picture of the hard

and indomitable temper of the peasant in adversity. The last thing Rasmine said was: 'Won't you go in and have some coffee?' I excused myself that I had had coffee with Kresten and that I was pressed for time, and without apparent sorrow in her voice she said: 'Well, it will be your own fault. A have invited you. So good-bye and thank you.'

Karen now was the only remaining sister. In a few minutes I approached Flyng's simple little grocer's shop. The shop-bell rang, and seemed as if it would never stop, when I went in. A little pale and lean woman in a frock like a monk's habit came hobbling out on a wooden leg, supported on a stick. 'What would you have?' One does not often hear this old-fashioned form of address, and I laughingly answer, 'Are we no longer good friends, Karen?' Then she laughed too, and her voice had the old silvery sound. I only need to hear it and look at her gentle clear eyes to understand that Karen now, as always, is the finest of the four sisters. And it was she whom Kathinka would make out to be a sour vixen.

I sit down in her poor little room, and she asks about all my people with genuine affectionate interest. Only by explicit questions can I force her to speak about herself. I learn that her husband was out of his mind during the last years of his life, that about the same time the eldest daughter, a widow, died in America, so that Karen had the four children home to bring up, while she had not only her house to look after, but the shop to mind. And there was no means of getting any

help. Finally Karen was driven to it, because her left leg became so bad, and it was pronounced to be caries. So it had to be taken off, and so she got her wooden leg; but people were so splendid and helpful then that there was really much to be thankful for. Now the grandchildren were soon to be off her hands, and they promised well and were smart children.

All this she relates to me with a smile in her pale little face, as if it were all nothing or what could not be otherwise. I hear Ivar's declaration: 'There is nothing more miserable than man,' and I look at her face and know it is a lie. For she has suffered all life's troubles with love and gentle smiles. She has had intelligence and thought for any one rather than herself, though disasters hung over her and swooped down like screeching sea-birds. I remember the good Lukerja in Tourgenieff and her sufferings—is not this little Karen from Jutland as great and as patient?

'So you had, I suppose, good assistance from your brother Kresten and your sister-in-law in the difficult years?' I probe the wound unmercifully.

'Ah, those years were really not so bad. And Kresten is such a good lad: there is no harm in him.'

I try with a few more questions, but cannot succeed in getting her to say a word against her sister-in-law. They are now so rich, and nowadays people think so much of clothes, and Karen does not want to disgrace them at their parties in her poor clothes. What is national character? What meaning is there in the characterisation of a people

or a race ? Is little Karen most typical of Jutland, or the peasant who revealed his soul to me in the cart ?

Man is the most miserable, man is the highest of all ; that is true here and true all the world over.

III

THE country road leads to the High Farm, and I catch a glimpse of its outline already on the ridge. Wonderful how long one's father's house retains its power over mind and thought ! I left it in my sixth year, saw it later only in holidays, until twenty-five years ago it went out of the hands of the family. But during all those twenty-five years I have yearned to see it again, and at the same time been afraid to do so. The home of my childhood and the garden where I played were and are the stage for all my dreams of country life and happiness. The poets, whose books I read, may give as many details as they please. All the events they describe in a country-seat pass before me in the rooms or garden-walks of the High Farm, and when the hunt is up, its line of huntsmen goes with dogs scenting game along the brow of the north wood. This farm which in the roseate hours of youth I pictured myself buying back for the family and making my own farm, where full of days I might welcome death, and which only a few years since I could not have revisited without tears ! This farm I am now approaching, though I know much is altered, and though I am warned that the little

copse nearest the farm, which I specially loved, is much thinned and almost destroyed. Will the pain of what is irrevocably lost be greater than the sight of what must be still there, which I so heartily long to enjoy again? Or will it disappoint me, prove smaller and less fair than it has been preserved in my faithful fancy?

Quite silently I walk along the road, and a solemn feeling rises in my mind. How can it be? I do not understand, but some lines of Goethe come into my head, and I continue to hum to myself:

Es ist der Weg des Todes, den wir treten.
Mit jedem Schritt wird meine Seele stiller.

And yet, is the thought not natural enough? It is twenty-five years since I came here as a raw student. If after so long an interval I come here again, I shall be on the threshold of old age, and twenty-five years more—I shall be among the silent dead!

Es ist der Weg des Todes—

No, no! I am come here to revive a little of the feeling of life's dawn, and not to say farewell to life.

Down there runs the stone fence, and behind it is the little farm Tryggevaeld, which originally belonged to the High Farm. It is unchanged, the most remarkable farmhouse in Denmark, with the three wings built of great blocks of stone, that can be seen from the road, and almost windowless.

When in my childhood the lights were lit in other

farms and houses and threw friendly twinkles out on the road, Tryggevaeld lay alone and gloomy with blind surfaces. Was it a gnome who built it? Were they gnomes who lived in it? The uncanniness of the farmhouse was increased when Ras Bödker, who owned it and worked up at the High Farm, was found one day hung in the pigsty there. An urchin of five, I saw him lying on the ground after being cut down, with the rope at his side; and this was my first impression of death. Had Ras Bödker hung himself because he dared not go home to the gnome at Tryggevaeld? Or did all owners of Tryggevaeld hang themselves and become gnomes and spooks afterwards? Tryggevaeld was my childhood's introduction to the nether world, the foundation of all ideas of the dark side of life, death, gloom and its monsters. Nor has it become more agreeable since.

Now the north wood appears, also unaltered. I have no time for an excursion down there, but I am glad to believe that it is still thick and impenetrable and that game is still found in its depths. What a clear idea of primitive forests and of the jungle the north wood gave me! All the boys' stories of Indians were enacted in north woods of incalculable dimensions; in its depth I had experience of dark paths which suddenly stopped, and ardently and heroically I pressed through those thickets to clearings where a hind was startled. On the edge of the north wood I saw my first live fox, and on the fence I surprised one day Denmark's humming-bird, the golden-crested wren. In the highest tops of the trees hawks' nests waved, which

I could never reach. I remember the reverence with which I held in my hand an egg from one of these nests, which the gamekeeper brought me. It was the royal eagle's egg, it was the egg of the phoenix, a miracle fetched down from the heights of heaven.

A wood to the right of the road has been felled, and gives me the first disappointment. But as the road bends I see the smithy and the blacksmith's little house in grey outline against the dark firs of the hills beyond, and here I have to stop. Firs which I saw planted in my youth have grown into great trees, which seem still more majestic as they rise one above another on the slopes. The picture is grand in its dignity, grander than I conceived; for this view alone I have not taken the journey in vain.

I go on and approach the smithy. Strokes of the hammer sound from it. The brook runs on, man works, Nature works; so it will be in twenty-five years, and twenty-five years more.

Es ist der Weg des Todes.

But now I have come quite close I see a sight which almost overwhelms me. With his knees on two stones, bent over the brook, and washing himself in its clear water is the old blacksmith Meyer, as I saw him do it before leaving off work when he was still young Meyer and had just taken over the smithy from his father. Often as a five-year-old boy I stood and watched the cleaning process, and when Meyer had finished I kneeled down myself and imitated him; and then I was sure of a beating

when I came home with dripping wet jacket. 'Have you been aping Meyer again, you idiotic boy?' And I promised so nicely never to do it again.

Now I stand here and see the same sight which attracted me thirty-eight years ago. Meyer snorts and hawks as of old, and gets up with water dripping from his face. I have just gone aside and slept for a night of thirty-eight years, and now I am here again.

'Good evening, Meyer! Can you recognise me?'

He starts a little at the ghost, but then it becomes clear to him, and with the broadest of smiles and the broadest Jutland accent he names my name and adds at once, 'Ye're like yer father.'

Soon after I sit in his room, unchanged with its red peasant furniture.

'A saw yer name i' the newspaper some years ago,' says Meyer graciously.

'Indeed! it is possible. In what connection was it?'

'A did not notice it. But A saw yer name in the newspaper.'

Meyer relates how beside himself there are only Jens Fürst, the day-labourer, and Mariane left. They are now over seventy. I knew them as young lovers, and told tales of them, betraying their secret to the master: 'Father, Je' Fut is squeezing Mariane.'

Meyer also tells how he has now passed over the business to his son. Young Meyer comes in and appears to be a fine fellow between twenty and

thirty. 'He has been a Guardsman,' says the father proudly. At last Meyer proclaims that he, too, has become well-to-do in the war, and bought thirty-five acres of land.

I pass on to the avenue leading to the High Farm. The main building is whitewashed: the garden and the little wood quite altered, and yet in the depth of the wood I find the swing hanging between the same two beeches as of old; and a little water-dairy is a picturesque wooden ruin, through whose opening the clear water of the basin smiles confidentially at me and reminds me of sailing wooden ships from side to side. My father's name greets me from the vane. When later I talk to the new owner, he assures me that my father set his stamp on the house from first to last. Especially did his draining of the bog make the farm what it is now. With joy and pride I hear this and the owner's assurance that he values the property and will take care to keep it up well. It is as if I entrusted a living being near to my heart into good hands, and I feel myself safe in doing so.

Indoors the rooms were almost entirely changed; only the little cupboard where I hid my playthings is the same, and I touch its brown-painted door, and remember the day of my father's funeral, when after severe temptations I stole there and took out a toy cart—to sorrow for a whole long day was much for a little fellow of five, and now it was enough. From the highest point of the garden I get a final panorama of Jutland extending below the farm. From up here the smithy and the brooks are still more beautiful, with something of the elevation and

dignified strength of a mountain range. Wider spreads the country with its fields and moors, big and severe, till the eye reaches the ridge of central Jutland.

So simple and dignified is the country of my home, so it speaks to me, warning me to be like itself. There is an ethos in this landscape which makes my return unforgettable and solemn, a call to seriousness and strength for every son of the country.

Mit jedem Schritt wird meine Seele stiller.

Death! Yes, that too is part of the picture. I still feel its sting. I feel as if I could never be weary, face to face with a country which I should revisit with like joy century after century, whether I stayed at home, or was out in a world the peculiar character of which is ever new and captivating. Why should I die when I never am tired of living and learning?

If the gods allow the laws of life and death to stand fast, this country speaks to our minds with strengthening words: Bear the burgeoning of spring, the vegetation of summer, the autumn fall, and the deathly chill of winter as quietly and as equably as my fields and my meadows.

With this impression I go back to life. So much I now know that the confident cocksure dreams of youth are never realised. Life is uncertainty, and more uncertain at every step we take. In early youth we dream entirely of living to see the happiness and strength of nature. But when the noon-

day height of life is reached, we must let the autumnal knowledge and sadness of nature sink into our minds if we would, like nature, go to meet the inevitable without complaint and without bitterness.

I

GÖTTINGEN

LONG and straight runs the Weenderstrasse, the chief street of the town where Heine of old so diligently studied the feet of the Göttingen ladies from the Weender gate to the Town Hall square. In the afternoon hours, when the regimental band was playing before the little old Town Hall, the street was filled with youth. On the left footpath, which continued along the Town Hall square, were seen the students promenading in their many-coloured caps, carefully tilted back to display the careful dressing of their pomaded hair, or else with their heads bound up in bandages and wadding after the last duel and in a cloud of carbolic odour. The right pavement came to an abrupt end at the square ; here the young ladies of the town took a walk at the same hours, virtuously arm-in-arm and with downcast eyes, divided from the students by the abyss of the street, across which at the most a deferential greeting might pass but which no one from either side ventured to cross. 'The side of vice and the side of virtue' were the students' names for these two footpaths, and the expression was typical of the student life. There was a gulf fixed between student and citizen, between the thirsty joys of the Bursch and the ordinary family life in the quiet rooms where the women held sway.

The time to see the students was in February and March, the Bavarian beer season, in the cellar of the Town Hall, when the mixture of beer and

syrup, which produced such frightful after-effects, was served by so-called Munich waitresses, whose genuineness did not prevent people who had personal relations with the country villages round Göttingen, Weende, Bovenden or Bremcke from recognising them as peasant girls and greeting them by name. Away in the corner of the hall played the town band, composed of working mechanics, draymen and other 'Philistines and cattle,' and the crowning performance of the evening was always the Bullerjan March, which had to be repeated *ad infinitum.* Bullerjan was a former conductor of the town band, who had been quite obscure, until one fine day he cleared off to America to escape a debt of twenty thousand marks. This instantly made him famous and an idol of the students, and his only composition, a march, to which he himself wrote the words, which were simple and easy to remember, was on the lips of all :

'Is that not Herr Bullerjan ?
Bullerjan is there !
Is that not Herr Bullerjan ?
Bullerjan is there !'

It was sung thirty times and over again, while all hammered with their beer-pots on the tables or stamped on the floor. Finally, when the band stopped, all went on howling in chorus, and stuck to the lines as long as their voices held out. Those who were too drunk to remember any more cried simply, 'Bullerjan! Bullerjan!' Mortal enemies fell on each other's necks exclaiming, 'Bullerjan!' and grinned and glistened with delight. On the

other hand, some good friends jumped up and wanted to fight. With great gravity they shook hands and pulled off coat, waistcoat, collar and tie. A cry of delight is raised : 'Hurrah, breeches too!' But when one student actually begins to fumble with his trouser-buttons, in step the 'Munich girls,' seize the two sinners with a firm grip, and get them into their clothes again. Up strikes the orchestra and there is a fresh howling of 'Is that not Herr Bullerjan? Bullerjan is there!'

Drinking and duels, night revelry and altercation with the police, debt and borrowing, and a universal huge contempt for the citizens filled the merry life of the students. But, good gracious, how virtuous these same young gentlemen could look when one met them occasionally at a social evening, for instance at the house of Frau Hommel, the leader of the society of the town, who was at home every fortnight. There they sat round on stools at the feet of young ladies, and looked as stiff and awkward as confirmation candidates and had not the least idea what to say. Every moment they blushed the scars from the sabre-cuts glowed in their beery faces. I helped a whole party over the tedium of such a family evening in the following way. When I came in, Frau Hommel exclaimed : 'Well, that is lucky. I have a countrywoman of yours here this evening. Now we shall see whether you can recognise her.' Whereupon the young ladies were ordered to stand up in two rows. There I stood like the prince in the fairy-tale and had to find the right one. My glance passed from one girl's face to another, till it stopped at one beneath fair

hair, a little rough round the forehead, with a suggestion of sea-breeze and salt water. The eyes were blue and smiled with sweet frankness. I bowed, and the amazement was great; there was a buzz of questions about my ears, 'How? Whence? Why?' With a malicious twinkle in my eye I explained, 'I chose the best-looking.' The reward was a smile that warmed my heart, and that evening I much enjoyed the society of the young daughter of a Colonel from Aalborg, and escaped the usual questions: 'Is much German spoken in Denmark?' and 'Are there wolves in Denmark?' The Germans themselves took my answer good-naturedly, and went into the question with real German thoroughness. All round I heard the groups discussing the problem of the relativity of beauty, and a learned young philologist took opportunity to explain at great length the contrast between the Egyptian and the Assyrio-Babylonian ideals of beauty; as it appeared from the monuments, the first favoured women as thin as a rail, the latter preferred them small and dumpy.

But now and again the two worlds had to meet, and virtue had to get a glimpse of the life of vice. Then a most creditable forbearance was exhibited. No one could be a more severe and worthy representative of female virtue in the little town than my old hostess, the little devout amiable lady at whose house I had furnished apartments, and who in family and social circles was always called Aunt Adelheid. Solemnity was the first feeling that seized the young student. It began in the entrance-hall with the chiming clock and the gently coloured

panes of glass, and increased when in the little reception-room one sat opposite the small thin pale lady in black, who talked the euphonious Hanoverian in a slow and pompous style of her own. But the next and the lasting impression was peace and comfort.

It was good to live in the two old apple-scented Empire rooms, where especially the bureau with its flap, which served me as a writing-table, and the countless secret pigeon-holes spoke of the quiet grace of the past and tempted one to hunt for old yellow bundles of letters. And how by degrees I became spoiled by the old lady and her stiff bony servant Martha! The two women vied at finding the best for the foreign student in the provision-shops of the town, and Aunt Adelheid often left a coffee-party early to go home and prepare an afternoon cup of cocoa for me. But she also cared for my spiritual well-being by arranging reading evenings in her own rooms, where the young people of the family read German classics in parts. Aunt Adelheid only liked 'the noble' in poetry, and so before the reading of *Götz von Berlichingen* put in brackets the sections where the language of the Lanzknechts becomes somewhat vigorous. So we left these out, but I often kicked Heini, the youngest of the family, under the table, and thus produced bursts of laughter and stops, which somewhat destroyed the moral equilibrium.

I was, however, to make the acquaintance of Aunt Adelheid on another side. The whole semester I had controlled myself, and often had to submit to the taunts of German students 'that

these wild peoples of the North did not know how to drink properly.' But one evening I had gone out with two Finnish students and one Swede, and that night we drank so deeply to the Union of the North that next morning I lay on my sofa pale as death, would not touch food, and felt that I could not stir a limb. At one o'clock that day I was due to a meal with a professor. The situation was desperate.

Martha must have reported my condition; for soon afterwards Aunt Adelheid came in and inspected me from the door through her glasses. I had expected a sermon, but instead I heard the decree: 'You must drink a litre of Lichtenhain beer.' I threw up my hands in horror: the very thought of beer made everything turn inside me; but Aunt Adelheid was already gone, and soon came back, accompanied by Martha, who carried two big stone pitchers.

Aunt Adelheid sat down opposite me, took one pot, and began: 'Prosit.' I drank in obedient desperation. The beer was light, tasted sour like home-brewed Danish beer, and like it was inclined to go into the nose. But it did good. When the pot was emptied I could get up, and a few hours later go through the Professor's party with éclat. In this Aunt Adelheid betrayed an unexpected insight into the mysteries and torments of student life, and never shall I forget the picture of the solemn old lady, who to help me on my legs sat down to drink beer with me in the middle of the morning.

II

THE TRAUERSALAMANDER

THE president struck his sabre on the table, so that it boomed through the tavern. 'Silentium! Club brother Josephson opens a cask of Munich beer!'

'Vivat, floreat, crescat!' (May he live, bloom, and thrive!) roared the students in chorus. Stout Josephson got up pale, smiling, and half-seas-over, and was greeted by noisy rounds of applause.

Just then it struck twelve, and Hassan the old servant of the club rolled in the big beer-cask.

'Eternal Bavarian beer! Hallelujah!'

But the president once more knocked the flat of the blade on the table, so that the empty beer glasses danced. 'Silentium! All fill their glasses and make ready for a Salamander to our dear brother Josephson, to whose praiseworthy self-sacrifice we owe this precious refreshing liquor.' Amid high applause the students with their glasses crowded round old Hassan, who had already got the spigot in the cask.

I really intended to go home to bed. We had drunk deep, and though by that time I could stand a good deal, I always fell short of the German topers, when we were in for it with 'Bierjunge,' and other sorts of drinking at the word of command, which enticed streams of beer over the tongue. The tobacco-smoke was so thick in the room that one could hardly see on the brown panelled walls the sabres, shields, and other trophies hanging,

which had been put up by members of the club for several generations.

But I was tempted by the genuine Munich beer in contrast to the bad sour Cologne beer, which was the club's usual drink, or 'stuff' as it is called in students' language. And stout Josephson was wont to be irresistibly amusing when he was fairly drunk.

I had scarcely got my glass filled before the word of command sounded afresh. The Salamander, this remarkable German drinking ceremony, which one must have seen to understand its effect, now began. 'Ad exercitium salamandri estisne praeparati?' (Are you ready for the exercise of the Salamander?) was the question, and the answer, 'Sumus' (Yes, we are), came pat from fifty throats. 'One, two, three, drink,' sounded again, half in German, half in Latin. The glasses were emptied in vigorous gulps. 'One, two, three! One, two, three! One, two, three!' An uproar was made with empty glasses on the surface of the table.

Finally the call came: 'Salamander over! Converse!' All sat down, and conversation began. Josephson was the centre of everything, and every one greeted him with, 'Prosit! Josephson,' while he emptied his glass. Josephson drank with them all and did good work.

He was the regular type of a carouser, which is disappearing more and more, and soon will only be found in *Fliegende Blätter*, the student who has thoughts and time only for drinking and duelling. No one knew the code of student customs

(Komment) better than Josephson, and no one practised them more severely than he towards the new-fledged students, 'the foxes.' If a 'fox' was recalcitrant, then Josephson by virtue of his many semesters, which gave him an almost despotic power, ordered the young fellow out to a common beer-round the next morning. Then they went from beer-house to beer-house, and everywhere each of them had quickly to empty his pot. The untrained 'fox' was as a rule in the end driven home by Josephson in an almost dead-drunk condition.

Josephson was a law student, but he had never had the courage to present himself for examination. Only once had he been on the point of reforming, and the tradition about it ran as follows: A brother of the club, who was a contemporary of Josephson's, after a fine examination, and having just become assessor, had one evening in the tavern touched glasses with Josephson and drunk to his health with the words: 'Prosit! colleague.' Josephson had turned white in the face with wounded sense of honour, and had been silent the whole evening, but drunk deep. At twelve o'clock he rose: 'Now this debauched life shall have an end,' he roared. 'I will go home to bed. From to-morrow I devote myself to science.' There was a great and universal rising: it was simply unheard of. But Josephson was obstinate. However, at last he let himself be persuaded to take part in a farewell feast. This was held round a beer-barrel of huge dimensions, and the speakers glorified Josephson, and compared him to the Elector Palatine Frederick, of whom the

drinking song says, that, after having sworn to devote himself to contemplation, he left behind him a diary, in which every leaf contained simply the significant sentence, 'To-day, drunk again!' That evening the footpath was too narrow for Josephson, he simply *had* to shove a policeman into the gutter: it was not at all bad will. The constable had no sense of humour, and took him off to the lock-up. When Josephson came home, he discovered that he had got vermin, and went for two days from one bathing establishment to another to get rid of them. But these hot baths awakened his thirst to an insane degree, and brought him far from science. Thus Josephson's last power of resistance was broken; and when some one jestingly asked him: 'How goes it with science, Josephson?' he replied by quoting the following little significant verse:

Und als sie nit mehr kunnten
Von wegen hohen Alters,
Dann schrieb die Sprüche Salomo
Und David seine Psalters!

More plainly he could not express his contempt for study than by these blasphemous lines.

When that evening I clinked glasses with Josephson, his eyes gave a friendly twinkle at me. 'Well, to-night you are holding out. It is generally painful to see how little you wild northern peoples can stand.' Later in the night he embraced me and said, 'You are a gigantically nice fellow. Go to Munich and study. In Munich they drink the whole day.'

At two o'clock we sang Scheffel's ever-amusing lines about the knight of Rodenstein who drank away his estates and country villages, giving the excellent reason: 'What is a village? Only manure and smoke!'

At half-past two we sang a mourning chorale on the dwarf Perkeo, who drank himself to death in the cellars of Heidelberg Castle. But suddenly the song was interrupted by a long howl and a wild squabble outside the door. 'It is Josephson,' went from mouth to mouth. But no one moved and went out to him. Josephson then was left to his own devices. And only next day I got to hear how badly it had gone with him. Out in the doorway he had fallen over the dog of an unfamiliar corps, and had given him a kick so that he howled. At that moment the students of that corps streamed out of their drinking-room, and fell upon Josephson. He was dragged in by them and laid on the table, and they had danced a war-dance round him and tilted beer in his face. After having filled his pocket with their visiting-cards, they pitched him out again.

Next morning Josephson woke with vague ideas of what had happened, but the visiting-cards witnessed that it was not a bad dream. Twelve visiting-cards, and so twelve duels in prospect. A court of honour was appointed from the two corps to appraise the affair. Our club was much shocked by what had happened, and thought of expelling Josephson: but no sufficient reason was found for that. The court of honour therefore sat. There could be no question of a duel with pistols: for

that there must be ladies in the affair. A sabre duel with whole, with half, or without bandage (in student's language, cum, sine, and sine-sine) was discussed, but the rapier, the thin sharp-ground blade, was found sufficient. The sentence was for a 'contrehage' with the rapier with each of the twelve opponents, each bout to last fifteen fighting minutes. A fighting minute consists of the exchange of four cuts, so a 'contrehage,' interrupted by bandaging and attention to wounds, may last for three-quarters of an hour, and put a great strain on the powers of endurance.

Since our club was pledged to satisfaction but did not bear weapons itself, Josephson had to borrow from another club its material, attendants, and doctor. Thus each duel cost him 60 to 80 marks.

In the course of six weeks Josephson had to settle his twelve duels. Twice a week he had to turn up in one of the taverns of the neighbourhood and fight with the cold steel. Each time when dripping with blood he left the field of battle, his head looked as if collops were cut upon it, but the doctor drew it so finely together that only thin red-edged scars were left. The head held out, but the heart suffered. Poor stout Josephson's 'beer-heart' simply could not stand the nerve-shock and the violent trial of endurance produced by each duel. If it had been Küppers, the champion duellist of the club, he would have pulled through; for he had won his fame by disabling the right forearm of a young medical student, who was obliged to postpone his examination for a

whole year while he learned how to use his left arm in operations. But Josephson was only first in drinking; his fighting was rather with the mouth.

One day when we met at the tavern, we were paralysed with the news: 'Brother Josephson is dead!' He had not fallen on the field of honour, but his 'beer-heart' had simply given out between two duels. Poor Josephson! There was scarcely time to mourn for him, we had all enough to do to think of his funeral.

It was the most stirring day I remember in my period as a German student, the day of our colleague Josephson's funeral. All the student corps in Bonn assembled to a man, led by their presidents in full dress (Vollwichs), which consisted of velvet caps with big feathers, laced jackets, rapiers in shoulder belts of the club colours, white breeches, and glazed boots reaching up to the thighs, with spurs. Especially smart were the Catholic unions, who, though they refused satisfaction, to the annoyance of the others on all official occasions wore rapiers. The presidents drove in carriages and fours; behind each carriage walked the other members of the corps in black with tall hats. I remember that I had forgotten to provide myself with a silk hat, and as it was Sunday the shops were shut. So I had to borrow my host's hat, which had bristles sticking up like a hedgehog. The more I stroked it, the more it bristled. It became necessary to put me in the last row of my club's procession because of my comic appearance. But whenever a club member turned and caught sight of my tall

hat, he made wonderful faces, and put his pocket-handkerchief to his eyes, ostensibly wrung by grief for Josephson.

At the grave I remember, behind the superintendent, who talked beautifully about a promising and virtuous young life which had been abruptly cut short, Josephson's old parents, simple folk, who looked as if they had pinched and spared to an incredible extent to keep the lad going, and two pale sisters quite young, but prematurely faded by want of light and joy, that *he* might live and do honour to the family. A single glimpse, which opened the background of this life of joyous carousing.

Probably 800 students were present, and it was an imposing sight when after the funeral we assembled in the square and sang the first verse of 'Gaudeamus igitur.' Then in close array we marched into the Kaiserhalle to perform a mourning Salamander over our student comrade Josephson, alas! too early cut off. The beer-pots stood ready, crowned with foam. But it made a strange impression that the waiters demanded payment for beer and glass together. Then they retired, and from the platform sounded the many rapiers, which the presidents of all the clubs simultaneously clashed on the table. 'Silence for a mourning Salamander!' We all stood, 800 young men, each with his hand on the handle of the glass. Now the well-known words of command sounded, and the usual ceremonies were performed in silence. But when the last command, 'One, two, three,' rang out over the big room, we all lifted our empty glasses high over

our heads and, as if with a single motion, dashed them on the floor.

Never have I heard anything like the thunder when the 800 beer glasses were smashed. It was a salute in the spirit of the deceased. Amid the sounds of this hecatomb of splintered glass the soul of brother Josephson, alas! too early cut off, soared up to the land of consummation.

POLISH MAGNATES

I

POLAND

'ALEXANDROVO!' called the guard, and turned the lamp round, so that the compartment was full of light. I was already on my legs. 'Alexandrovo! Alexandrovo!' sounded down the corridor, and the passengers tumbled out of their cushions above and below. Only experienced travellers continued to lie for a while longer. I had gathered my hand-baggage in the corner and held my passport tight in my right hand. At the same time with my left I felt for my money; yes, it was still there, and with a sigh I could not but remember how sadly my German money dwindled when I changed it into roubles in the morning at Berlin. Happily the travelling expenses were to be paid by the Polish count who had sent for me to be domestic tutor to his only son.

Wellnigh twenty years have passed, and yet I remember perfectly my feelings and the excitement of that night when for the first time I approached the frontier of great Holy Russia.

I had gone out into the corridor, and stood leaning my forehead against the window-pane. Outside lay the endless darkness of a winter's night, as massive as the wall of an old castle; and I heard the hollow reverberation of the storm as if under deep vaults. But every now and then the overhanging darkness was pierced by signal lights, and then I saw the snow gliding over hedge and ditch, varying with the sinking or rising of the soil. It was falling so densely that one seemed able to see

the drifts grow, silent and soft. And if when a gleam of light came one looked up, the snowflakes came dancing to meet one another, a merry spectacle when one was in shelter from their piercing bite. They tumbled on to the window-pane, in a moment extended their delicate quivering members, and then burst into a long tear.

Beyond this heavily brooding gloom, beyond this arena of storms, Russia lay before me, extending thousands of miles eastward and ever eastwards, over the Urals, over the steppes of Siberia to the China Sea! So mighty in its expanse, that if one could take hold of it and roll it over Europe, it would cover it all up and reach far out into the roaring Atlantic, beyond the farthest cliffs and skerries. Into this great foreign land, the language of which I did not understand, I was now entering, and suddenly I felt how I was at home in Germany; oh, if I could only stay here, here at home!

I could not help smiling at this sudden affection for the 'great Fatherland,' and this dread of the still greater one that I was entering. And yet I was no coward and was used to travel.

Now the train rocked violently, the lights became more numerous, the speed slackened. The door was flung open, an icy cold wind whistled into the corridor. 'Alexandrovo! All passengers to alight!'

When, a quarter of an hour later, I sat in the waiting-room below the big samovar, having my first glass of steaming Russian tea before me, with some disappointment I asked myself, 'Was this all?' Certainly the customs examination had

provided a few experiences. A rascal, who said he had no money, had in the very face of the customs officer impudently demanded twenty kopecks of me, and deep down in the bottom of my trunk the officer had found my Polish grammar and confiscated it as dangerous to the State. But I had had no difficulties over passports. At the suggestion of a Russian merchant, after I had given up my passport to a military personage in the train I had gone later into the passport-office and demanded it back. Four soldiers were lying half-asleep on a row of sofas; one of them pointed to a heap of passports on the table: I might take for myself what I wanted. I was full of amazement: was it thus that watch was kept over Holy Russia? If I had been a Nihilist, I should have sneaked in without the least difficulty and selected a superfine passport from the pile.

The train rolled on. The dawn began to break and the snowstorm had ceased. I sat at the window and looked out at the new country. It was Poland essentially as I had pictured it, wide and flat, with low miserable houses, without gardens, without a tree to give shelter, and villages which entirely concealed their dwelling-houses behind greyish mud-walled straw-thatched barns. Here and there in a field a solitary willow, all crooked by constant battling with storms, left helplessly projecting out of the white expanse. Or else a yellow sand-drift, cleared of snow by the wind, a bare crest rising out of the depths under snow and earth. Ever stronger became the impression of grey melancholy; at last not merely was the air and the barns but even the

snow grey, bluish-grey and lustreless. It was easy to imagine a grey wolf slinking round the house-corner yonder. But alas! now I remembered there were no wolves any longer in Russian Poland.

I could not but bethink me of the exclamation of Napoleon's soldiers at the sight of this country: 'And this is what the Polacks call a fatherland!' But it had memories which threw a tinge of melancholy over these plains. For many months I had studied Polish history, read the Polish poets, and been fascinated by their fervent belief in a resurrection for their crucified country.

My heart throbbed with longing expectation of this new realm, of which I was to take spiritual possession, and a verse of Kraszewski came into my head:

'Woe to the young man who looks at the world with old eyes!'

II

WARSAW

ON the streets of Warsaw the snow was melting and the carriage slid noiselessly through grey slush, rocking like a sailing-ship, with a wake behind, and spirting waves far over the footpaths. In the narrow lanes the houses were bespattered right up over the windows of the first floor. What strange streets! All kinds and varieties of houses side by side. It was not the confusion of styles one sees in Berlin; these rows of houses suggested rather an entire lack of meaning and purpose in the life of

the people. Towering mercantile establishments with balconies, pilasters and herms stood alongside of single-storied houses, such as one finds in a country town, and hovels of wood, painted red, with blue-green roofs, covered with moss. The paving of the streets was as irregular as the buildings: first we slid lightly over asphalt or wood, then we were bumped against rough paving stones, which peeped out of the slush at wide intervals, as full of holes as decayed teeth.

Equally heterogeneous was the crowd in the streets. The nimble little street-sweepers with their fur hats, ragged smocks and white aprons darted in and out on the pavements, and exchanged words with the huge stout drivers in blue caftans, who guided their troikas with arms wide apart. Even the young officer who trotted past held the reins high over the horse's head with both hands in a manner quite inadmissible for a Western chevalier. A magnificent sight was presented by the Circassians, with their black red-tufted hats and their big mantles spread over the horses' backs and hind-quarters. Barbaric beauty indeed! Wild soldier faces with rough debauched features, and yet, imposing fellows that it gave one pleasure to contemplate.

On the back seat opposite me sat the Count's secretary, the pale Pan Chelmonski. He did not understand a word of any European language. And yet I had so much counted on the linguistic talent of the Slavs! What a horrible smell adhered to this Pan Chelmonski, a mixture of poor scent, bad tobacco, and baby-linen! What a fearful atmo-

sphere there must be in his home! This too put me in bad temper, and Pan Chelmonski's smile and the friendly twinkle of his eyes could not restore my good humour. When I rolled into the palace-yard I wished myself a hundred miles away.

The first person I met on entering the palace was a servant, who was waving a steaming pan, on which every moment he was pouring sweet-smelling essences. A balsamic fragrance pure to inhale and yet with the softness of the East! All despondency disappeared: it was good to be here.

Through a succession of rooms I was conducted into the Countess's great rococo drawing-room. Here I came to a standstill, and could scarcely repress a cry of admiration. It was all glittering in white and gold. It began with the numerous huge polar-bear skins on the floor, and rose in white tones, over the furniture, up the panels of the walls to a roaring symphony in the ceiling: there in the hollow of the C-shaped ornament shone flames of fire, or lobate palm-leaves trembled in a gentle breeze. Like a message from the freshness of Nature outside was the green tapestry on chairs and sofas, with their purple or dull white flowerets. In the middle of the floor shone a blood-red carpet, a sea of blood in white snow! Before the windows hung bright yellow silk curtains, and round the room were arranged cosy corners, concealed by folding screens of glass and gilding and silk embroidery. Delicate shelters for frivolous mirth, with sofas and cushions, and everything that rococo flirtation can require.

I threw myself down into a deep arm-chair and

waited to be presented, in confident anticipation that in this rich man's house I should have some experiences.

III

COUNT JANOWSKI

MEANWHILE I had to wait so long that I began to feel uncomfortable in the great and elegant rococo drawing-room. I looked down at myself and asked what business had a little youth like myself, in a plain Danish jacket-suit, with this joyous and proud pomp of a brilliant past. When I moved, the silk tapestry of the chair crackled disapproval with a sort of dry cough, and the red-veined marble of a table-slab was like ice to my hand as I touched it. At last I could fancy that the contents of the room were staring at each other in the deadly silence of high rank, and mutually vowing to continue doing so until they had turned me out. It was not open disdain that could be answered with an ill-tempered rejoinder; it was a silent expulsion from their circle, and therefore nothing but what they could all with one voice subsequently disclaim.

All this discomfort disappeared in a moment when Count Janowski entered. I felt immediately how this elegant pomp of gold became a natural frame for the high-born nobleman of fifty, whose ponderous figure bore itself with natural grace, and whose plump face, with its finely curved nose and somewhat vacant, almost glazed eyes, would have looked splendid under a big white-powdered

wig. He threw himself into one of the large easy-chairs, the arms of which slid round his sides, and instinctively both his hands glided almost caressingly over their bevelled and delicately rounded extremities.

He started with a short enquiry, what sort of journey I had had, but completely ignored the answer, and began to talk about his boy, whose tutor I was to be. Every time he mentioned the boy's name there was a gleam in his eyes like summer lightning.

'We had really thought of an Englishman for his tutor. Poles are not suitable for the purpose; the standard of hygiene and education is too low in our country to make it possible. But when the Countess was talking the matter over with our medical man, Dr. Pollack, he said at once: "You ought to engage a Scandinavian. Gymnastics are a strong point in Scandinavia, and there is nothing your son requires more than a course of rational gymnastics." The idea appealed to me. I have no personal acquaintance with your little Scandinavian people, but I got an impression of your high moral standard in conversation with a friend of my youth, King Oscar of Sweden.'

I could not refrain from quietly objecting that Sweden was a different country from Denmark; but the Count was genial enough to pretend he had not heard, and continued:

'What I want my little son Gucio made into is a *man*. A man with respect for the traditions of his family and his nation. What is your religion?'

I professed myself a Lutheran, but added that this was only for the census lists.

'Why, yes, you understand, of course, that Gucio must be carefully brought up as a good Catholic. You must accompany him to mass, and kneel when he kneels. You can dispense with crossing yourself. The lad is not to be deeply religious, but just so much that as a nobleman he can set a good example to the people. So he must learn to obey. He is not obedient to his mamma, strangely enough, for I never have any difficulties with him. You must teach him to obey and respect his mamma. In particular, you must keep a tight hand on him, naturally in an agreeable way, be friendly but firm. I forbid you to touch him. One beats, if need be, an animal, but never a man. But all the same, if he lies, beat him. I had a brother who quite ruined himself because he lied. He cost us over a million roubles before he was fully twenty. Now he lives in a little place in Galicia with only one servant to wait upon him. I have settled a hundred and fifty thousand roubles upon him, but he can only touch the interest. So you understand what a miserable life he must lead.'

The count looked at me, but evidently did not read in my eyes the correct sympathy with the unfortunate man. 'He lied, as I tell you, and that is why he came to grief. He lied even to Papa, who was the most gentle and intelligent father one could conceive. I have never kept any secrets from Papa, and I never left him in ignorance of any of my youthful mishaps in love or money matters. Even now that he is dead, I live with

him in my thoughts every day. He was a man, and I should wish my son to be like him. First and foremost, the lad must be hardened; but do not forget that he is delicate and has not much strength. You will have hard struggles over that with his mamma, who is anxious about his health. So am I too, but yet we must make a man of him, is it not so? He must be hardened to become a worthy bearer of his great name. But, as I have said, it will be difficult with his mamma, and I beg you to show energy and tact and keep me out of it as much as you can.'

I nodded circumspectly: 'It is evidently a question of combining diplomacy with educational method.'

'Exactly,' said the Count with a smile of relief. 'You had better make the best possible impression on the Countess. To-morrow she and Gucio will return from the country, and then you will be presented to them both. To-day I beg you to enjoy life, and I have commissioned Pan Chelmonski to show you round Warsaw. Please apply to him also when you want money. I beg you most kindly never to speak of money to me.'

When I rose, the Count inspected my figure with a hasty glance. 'Have you any outdoor furs?'

'No.'

'You cannot dispense with them in our hard climate. I shall ask Pan Chelmonski to help you buy a fur coat.'

IV

INVOLUNTARY AMUSEMENT

OUTSIDE the palace gate Pan Chelmonski lit a cigarette, and the first word he uttered was 'tailleur.' I began to think that hitherto he had concealed his linguistic ability, and radiant with delight proceeded to chatter away in French. But this appeared to be the only French word Chelmonski understood, and subsequently I comprehended that he had just been taught it by the Count.

In the big tailor's shop beyond the Hotel Bristol I was taken in hand. The tailor knew a little German, but only imparted to me what he thought fit, and for the most part communicated in Polish with Pan Chelmonski. Only as I left the shop did he inform me that I had purchased the expensive fur coat in which I was now attired, lined with bison-skin and with a sealskin collar, and had ordered a fashionable morning-suit to be delivered in five days. A calculation showed me that this meant the anticipation of two months' salary.

So when a second time we were in the street I was in bad temper, and protested when Pan Chelmonski called a cab. I was in no mind to drive. The pounds were gone, but now I would be a man and show that there must be economy with the pence. But with huge grimaces Chelmonski managed to explain to me that the day's spree was to be at the Count's expense, and hauled me up into the cab. I could not but be thankful for my furs; to such an extent did the

east wind bite through my boots and the lower parts of my legs, which were not protected by fur. And when the vehicle accidentally stopped at a street-corner, where three old ragged beggars sat in snow up to their necks and wept with blind eyes at feeling half a kopeck in their piteous outstretched hands, I leant back in the carriage in my snug comfort and felt myself fortunate indeed. Pan Chelmonski was a master of the art of directing the driver: one touch on his right arm and the carriage swung round a corner to right, one on his left and it curved so sharply round a street-corner that a pedestrian was splashed all over with slush and used bad language. A poke in the back informed the driver that he must unconcernedly drive straight on, and a roar brought him to a standstill. The fare was twenty kopecks and no pourboire.

We stopped before a huge dirty-grey building in a dismal side street, and without the slightest understanding I followed Pan Chelmonski up the stairs. On every floor the tenements were thickly packed and all bore numbers. An open door gave a view of a kitchen. Evidently each set had only one entrance, and suddenly there came into my head a clear recollection of a passage in Dostojevski's *Crime and Punishment*, where the murderer cannot get out of the tenement because there is some one constantly out on the staircase. The thought of murder and the close atmosphere of the musty staircase made me feel dejected, but when Pan Chelmonski opened the door of tenement No. 28, I reeled back in horror at the stench which met me from the kitchen, a horrible blend of the effluvia of

baby-napkins and bad tobacco smell, the same that adhered to Pan Chelmonski's clothes, but incredibly stronger. But my guide made a gesture of invitation: I had to enter this inferno.

A pale little woman, who was standing in a peignoir and rinsing baby-linen in a tub, screamed at the sight of the strange gentleman in furs, but was pacified by Pan Chelmonski and opened the door into the room behind.

In the family living- and sleeping-room, which was still more heavily charged with bad smells, a black-haired sallow-complexioned man was sitting on the floor and playing with a two-year-old child, while another man stretched on the sofa was smoking a cigarette. Both rose and were introduced: Pan Bienkowski, the tenant, and Pan Wolinski.

Both these gentlemen knew German, and hastily explained to me that they were teachers in a commercial school and Chelmonski's best friends. They offered me tobacco, but I declined; I saw nothing, heard everything indistinctly; one thought alone kept sounding in my head, to get out, out again into the fresh air. I was forced down on a chair, and imagined that my fine new fur stuck to its greasy seat. Pan Bienkowski showed me his big boy, who was the whitest of all these white-skinned beings, and took an infant out of its cradle, and enthusiastically held it under my nose. But my expression must have been too obvious, for he asked: 'Ah, so you don't like children?' and banged the child back again into the cradle. I excused myself on the ground of fatigue caused by the journey and hunger. The last made them all hurry.

I was already by the door to rush out at the first sign of departure; but as the two gentlemen had to accompany me on the round to explain the sights of Warsaw, I had to look on while Bienkowski attired himself in black frock-coat and grey striped trousers. Wolinski was in a worse case. His breeches were passed, even by Pani Bienkowska, who was called in from the kitchen for the purpose. Only there had been grease-spots on the seat for several days, and Pani Bienkowska had to supply him with a basin of warm water and a cloth, with which he valiantly rubbed off the stains. The coat-collar received a similar treatment. But the waistcoat was hopeless. Pan Bienkowski had to lend him a black waistcoat, but as Wolinski was somewhat large in the stomach, it was necessary for Pani Bienkowska to rip up the back of it, bore holes and draw laces through them. Amid much hilarity Wolinski was laced into this corset from behind.

Then we had to go out into the kitchen to wait, while Pani Bienkowska changed. I made an attempt to open a kitchen window, but Bienkowski besought me to desist. The children could not bear a draught of the cold winter air. So in desperation I sat down on the kitchen dresser and thought of the rococo drawing-room I had so recently left.

Pani Bienkowska appeared in a very neat black cloak and with a waving black feather in her hat, which seemed to be worth more than the whole of the furniture. Still she had to go into Number 29 to ask her female neighbour to look after the children. Not till after that did we descend the

stairs, with the inhabitants of the house hanging over the banisters; for it was already rumoured that a fine outing awaited us at Count Janowski's expense.

Déjeuner at the Hotel Europa was introduced with copious vodka and masses of salt-fish dishes: next came the Russian 'blini' with caviare from Astrakhan and melted butter. What followed I have forgotten, till the big yellow pears, which made one think of ostrich-eggs and cost a rouble apiece, came on the table.

'A fine life in Russia awaits you,' said Pan Wolinski over his third pear, 'if only you understand how to get the benefit of your good position and abstain from politics. Besides good fare you will get obsequious attendance, which you will miss when you get back to Western Europe. I should have no objection to being in your place.'

'Your stomach could not endure that,' said Bienkowski to tease him.

With Pan Chelmonski and Pani Bienkowska I could exchange nothing but smiles and healths. 'Zdrowie' we cried time after time and clinked glasses.

I only remember as through some one else's consciousness the drive through the big Lasienski Park. Bienkowski lectured me on the period of the Polish monarchs, and when I answered I heard my words far away. At last the Pole said bitterly: 'Yes, of course, these are all only memories to us.' I understood that I had answered idiotically, but could remember nothing. I asked leave to go home to have a little sleep, but the request was not

granted. They were evidently afraid that afterwards I might be unwilling to continue, and they were so honourable that they did not think it fitting to eat and drink at the Count's expense without my presence.

Drowsily I sat down to a big dinner at the Bristol and drank fresh supplies of vodka, beer and wine. Then we were certainly at the opera, and then I slept snugly on Pani Bienkowska's shoulder between the intervals, when the lights turned on compelled me to sit up.

I remember that once more I asked leave to retire, but had to give in again and sit down to a supper with vodka and salt meat and pancakes with horrible melted butter, and joints with brown potatoes, which burned in the mouth, and ice which gave coolness for a moment.

I had just enough consciousness left to ask Bienkowski on taking leave: 'How much has this cost?' I heard him pass the question on to Chelmonski, and answer, 'Oh, about the same as your furs. But we have had a never-to-be-forgotten evening. Isn't it charming here in Holy Russia?'

V

AMONG POLISH MAGNATES

JOSEPH the valet came quietly in and rolled up the blinds. Against the window lay a greyish fog, the sticky and sour mist from the Vistula which on certain days converted the whole of Warsaw into a stinking sewer. 'Dost thou know, master, that

to-day it is three months since thou camest here ? ' There is something comfortably patriarchal about the Polish language with its ' thou ' and ' master.' The language and the everlasting kissing of the hand bear witness of old times, when simplicity and submissiveness were greater than they are now. Joseph went off to arrange little Count Gucio's morning bath.

Ah ! what a strange life I had become acquainted with since that first morning, when Count Janowski entered the rococo drawing-room to interview me.

As he had warned me, there were real difficulties with Mamma. She insisted on prescribing the programme for the day down to the smallest details, forbade me to expose the boy to the least exertion, and yet expected to see great results from the ' Scandinavian training.' But one week when the Countess was away from home I broke with the entire scheme, and let the boy skate and make snow-men and castles both morning and afternoon. The result was excellent. When she came home again, the rogue had rosy cheeks, and I was regarded as a wizard. The effeminate drives in closed carriages ceased. The fine horses, coachman and groom who were attached to the boy's person were entirely out of work, and the men at any rate were quite content.

What a land of contrasts ! From the noble suites of rooms, where all was luxury and perfume and everything was consistent with hygienic requirements, only a few paces over the courtyard led to Pan Chelmonski's dwelling in the stable-wing, where in a few minutes one was half choked with

putrid smells. Underneath the stable was as clean as a confectioner's shop with flagged walls and sand-strewn paths. Here every morning three grooms, under the supervision of old Joachim, worked for several hours at drawing the Count's escutcheon and monogram in sand of different colours and in constantly fresh combinations.

In the inner room the boy began to chatter, and a moment afterwards came the little ten-year-old Count Gucio fluttering in his long nightgown and sat down on the edge of my bed.

'Ah, Monsieur, would you like to hear what a wonderful dream I have had? Can you guess what I dreamt?'

'No, tell me.'

'Well, really, the dream was not very nice. But all the same I dreamt that Mamma was accused of thieving and put in prison. I too was summoned before the court and asked if I believed she had stolen. No, I answered. I know that Mamma will lie, but I don't really believe she would steal.' He leaned back with a smile. 'That was only a dream. But I believe I should have given the same answer if I had been awake.'

'Fie, for shame, Gucio!'

'Ah, you know as well as I what Mamma is. And you know, too, why she doesn't suit this house—because she is not a magnate like the rest of us, but a "slachcianka" (woman of the lower nobility, from 'slachta'). You can't think how plain and frugal everything is at her father's estate in Lithuania. Aunt has told me that there are two servant-girls—servant-girls, I like that!—who wait at table.

They haven't a man-servant in the whole house. You must admit that it is a misfortune for our house that she ever came into it. I know well, for Aunt has told me, how it happened. Grandfather was just dead, and so Father couldn't go to the club or take part in anything at all with his equals. Well, that was how the sly old Drohojowski enticed Papa to visit his house in Warsaw; every evening Papa sat there—it was so charming and homelike—with two young daughters, who embroidered and played the piano. Papa let himself be hooked. Poor Papa, how he has repented it since! Under other circumstances he would certainly not have been caught. But when one is in mourning, you can understand that one is bored.'

'But now she is your mother, and that is what you forget.'

'Ah, pooh! How often she calls me in, and we are to be so nice and comfortable; and then she forgets all about me if Romana brings her a new hat. Papa is quite different: he really loves me. By the by, let me give you a piece of good advice, Monsieur; never complain of me before *déjeuner*. At the *déjeuner* table Papa wants to be "bon camarade" with me, you understand, to laugh and joke with me. He only sees me that one hour in the day. So you understand it is extremely painful for him to have to sit with wrinkled brows and play at being offended. In itself your anger yesterday was quite justified; but wait to complain of me till after *déjeuner*, if we can't settle it here between ourselves.'

'Your wisdom is almost uncanny, Count Gucio.'

'No, but you must believe I mean well to you, and want you to be comfortable here. It is not so very amusing here now. But in Russian February Papa and Mamma will both be in St. Petersburg for the court festivities, so then we can skate and make snow-men again. In April the season begins for plovers' eggs. You get leave to eat all the plovers' eggs you will, though they cost half a rouble apiece, says the cook. In summer out at Janow it will also be nice. Besides, you must admit that Papa is a grand man to live with, even if one sees him as seldom as we two.'

'Yes; but now go in and get dressed.'

Soon after, the sounds were heard of the usual concert during the toilette. Joseph had to imitate every conceivable animal-cry or bird-note. As Gucio said with his wonderful mixture of the shrewdness of an old man and the simplicity of a child: 'Joseph is an ideal valet. He has no body-smell, and he can imitate all the birds and beasts under heaven.'

As we sat at tea, there came a message from Aunt, old Countess Janowska, whether we would not pay her a morning visit. This was strictly forbidden by the Countess, but actually at the moment she was in her bath—a bath of egg, milk and attar of roses, at which even the Polish aristocracy were a little scandalised—and when by spying I had convinced myself that she was well out of the way, we hurried down. In Countess Janowska's rooms there was a peace and comfort which elsewhere in the palace one missed; and her walls were filled by pictures of the good modern Polish school, which, with Zakowski as its leader, has superseded

the older school of Matejko and its big historical or battle scenes with their closely entangled bodies and stiff staring looks, representing a new Poland, less dramatic but more true. In their pictures I discovered again the simple Polish landscapes, just as I had seen them that first winter's morning, the great plains with the scattered low sand-ridges, with fir-woods, and the great lines of the rivers. It is the rivers with their silent monotonous willow-copses that give the Polish landscape its character, and endue it with a proud melancholy charm. To go with the old Countess from picture to picture, looking, conversing and asking questions was a regular catharsis of the mind.

The boy had just begun an exciting bull-fight with Aunt's big mastiff, when the signal was given and we rushed upstairs, past the spies we had posted there. We could rely on the servants. But it was already too late. We saw Romana, the Countess's crafty lady's-maid, hurry out of our rooms and into those of her mistress.

In a few minutes Countess Janowska was down upon us herself, in a red peignoir, without rouge and with the remains of egg still on her hair.

'Monsieur! You have disobeyed my orders.'

'There came a message from the Countess, and I cannot be impolite to the Count's sister.'

'She stands for nothing in this house: you must look to me alone.'

'Till I have the Count's word for it, I shall behave as I have done to-day. The more so as I have the greatest sympathy and compassion for the Countess.'

'Compassion!' the Countess laughed scornfully. 'Don't you think I have compassion—for her, because she is so old and so ugly, and therefore nobody loves her?'

Now Count Gucio entered the arena. '*I* love her. And you forget, Mamma, that you are not very bewitching either in this attire.'

'Oh, mon roi! You know how I love you. Why will you not love those I love and hate those I hate?'

'Because you love the bad and hate the good.'

She stamped the floor in her rage. 'You can stay in your rooms. No skating for a whole week.'

'That concerns your son's health,' I objected.

But little Gucio had found a better expedient. He seized a tray which contained a valuable crystal set which she had given him as a Christmas present. 'If you don't take back that order I shall break this. You know I keep my word, and that I am not afraid of you.'

'Oh, mon roi, murmure! Kiss me anyhow.'

'No, go and dress yourself properly.'

But the Countess rushed down to the Count; here she felt herself stronger. The Aunt, however, had stolen a march on her, and had given notice to withdraw the million roubles she had invested in the estate if the boy did not receive permission to visit her every morning. Even the valet Alexander had been sorry for his master, as he stood helplessly between the two frantic women.

'Sell your racing stud and pay her the money!'

'I cannot forego my only passion.'

'Mortgage the estate!'

'I cannot borrow any more upon it.'

'Ugh, how stupid you are! You don't get two per cent for your money, I am sure of that, and you have no idea of business.'

'A nobleman is not a man of business. We leave that to the Jews and people of the lower "slachta."'

The door slammed violently behind Countess Janowska.

VI

THE DONKEY AND THE MONKEY

THOUGH only twenty years have passed since those days, I can write these recollections as if well-nigh a century had gone by. For the family, to which I have given the name of Janowski, one of the oldest in Poland, is already extinct, fallen like an old rotten tree. First of all, the old Countess Janowska died of bronchitis: she was spared from witnessing the end of her family. The circumstances connected with the Count's death will be fresh in the memory of every Pole, for the Press of the whole world gave currency to them and called attention to the life of the Polish aristocracy in a very unflattering way. One night at the Jockey Club in Budapest he lost two millions of Austrian kronen to a Hungarian. Apparently he was quite calm after the game, which only lasted an hour and a quarter, went into the reading-room of the club and made himself comfortable with a pile of newspapers before him. The next day he travelled home to Janow, and there early one morning he

was found dead in bed. The medical certificate was for syncope, and the rumours about cyanide of potassium were never confirmed. He was buried with full honours. But when it came to the probate court, it appeared that the debts were greater than the assets: not even the debt of honour in Budapest could be paid. A few years before, the Countess had found out how things were going, and had gone back to the Drohojowski family, and disappeared from the world and society, forgotten and hidden in the woods of Lithuania. Therefore it was fortunate that, soon afterwards, delicate little Count Gucio died, solitary and poor, as the last of the race.

Now I know this tragic ending, I can better understand many little incidents that happened then, especially the evening visits the Count paid to the boy's bed. In the gloaming I could see his distressed countenance, as he bent to watch the sleeping child and listened to his regular breathing. One evening, as he was going away, he said to me as he passed: 'Ah, what are our wishes! We do not even know what we should wish for ourselves or our children, life or death.'

But nothing was done to avert the threatening ruin. On the contrary, never was life more prodigally lived than in these last years of the family's palmy days. Pan Chelmonski's observations gave me to understand that the annual expenses came to nearly half as much again as the civil list of the Danish King. When one saw this life at close quarters, one could scarcely understand how the sum sufficed. I have seen the Count in one evening

at home lose 60,000 roubles at play; I have followed the Countess's preparation for the carnival month in St. Petersburg: every gown cost between five and ten thousand francs. I remember a single week that the Count had to spend on his estate before his annual cure at Karlsbad; to amuse himself he bought a motor-car for 14,000 roubles. The next day it was damaged in the wheels, and to repair it would have taken five days. In order not to waste the time he bought a new one at the same price, and sent the old one to the coach-house as no longer fit for use.

But never was I more conscious of the mingled comedy and inconvenience of riches than that day in May when little Count Gucio and I were to remove to the country, from the winter palace to Janow. It was not enough that the trunks filled a whole coach in the little local train, but we had to engage the only first-class carriage entirely for ourselves, our servants and the menagerie, which consisted of two dogs, a parrot and a South American monkey in a silver cage. An old Russian general, who had to travel by the same train, had to salute deferentially, and by permission of the little lord was allowed to take a seat in our carriage, so as not to mingle with the common herd; the permission was only given reluctantly, after the little patriot had arrogantly surveyed the oppressor from head to foot. The carriages, the four carriage-horses, the riding-horse, the donkey and the cow, which supplied the heir-apparent with pure milk and was inspected once a week, had to be sent after us by special train.

In these surroundings, especially out in the country, one could not help being interested in the animals, though not so much in the horses and the lucky cow. The latter was tethered in a good grass-plot in the park, surrounded by all the poetry of Nature, from which a cow, who can eat it all up, certainly feels far more inward comfort than the lyric poet, who can only feed on it in a roundabout way. We should certainly get much more intense compositions if our lyric poets had cows' stomachs!

Of the two dogs it was the little slender greyhound Lila, with the timid brown eyes, that from the first captivated me most. If I had not myself experienced the tyrannical inclinations of the young heir, I might have read them from Lila's behaviour. This little white animal, made for caresses and delicate hands, was never itself by reason of its varying treatment. First kicks and blows, the next moment pats and feeding with dainties, all without any reason, not as reward or punishment, had made the dog unnatural both in joy and sorrow. Even when it gambolled in fawning gratitude there was a quivering terror in all its limbs, and the least unexpected movement of the hand tightened all its muscles in a convulsive jerk.

The donkey, which had been many years in the boy's possession, became known to me one day by accident, when the rogue had harnessed it to his little carriage out in the park, and had ordered six fellows from the farm, who were busy raking the lawns, to get up into the carriage. He himself climbed on to the donkey's back, with a whip

constructed by himself out of an old spur-wheel fastened to a willow branch. Then they started hurry-skurry towards the castle, the boy continually prodding it in the head and neck. The fellows at first were silent out of sympathy with the animal, but as the young lord constantly turned to them with laughter and shouts, there was nothing for it but to chime in. When they approached the castle steps the noise was indescribable. I heard it and came out; instantly I ordered the boy and the fellows to get down. The little lord was frantic, and threatened me with his spur-wheel, while he deluged me with rough Polish abuse. There was nothing for it but to take him by the scruff of the neck and, in the presence of the fellows, give him a sound thrashing, the first and the last, for it brought about my resignation.

When I turned back to the donkey, it was still standing with snorting nostrils, bleeding head and quivering sides. I patted it, pulled and offered it a handful of grass; it snuffed a little, took it and began to eat with no sign of pleasure. I was struck by the heavy melancholy of the donkey's face; the long tufts formed as it were furrows in its forehead and threw deep shadows over its eyes. Later, I often noticed it: it was always in grey melancholy, indifferent to caresses, patient under blows; only when one touched its long ears it made a sudden angry movement. In spite of years of subjection and bad treatment there was still something it could not stand.

The little monkey had been given to Count

Gucio by his aunt. It was a valuable and rare animal, hardly more than 15 centimetres in height, and at first very shy. Out at Janow, where there was nothing else to do, I could sit for hours in front of its silver cage and entice it with nut-kernels and bread. But time after time it happened that, just as an approximation had begun, the door opened and Count Gucio rattled in. Then it ran back to the farthest corner of the cage, and the advantage gained was once more wasted. The monkey never made friends with him; for when food and endearments did not quickly attain their object, he would look for a stick to poke and beat it with. But after the end of a few months, when I was alone, I could entice it to eat out of my hand. But the least touch on the door and it bolted.

One day I had been out a walk in the neighbourhood, and when I came home the monkey was sitting in its cage dripping with water and with chattering teeth. The boy was examined, and it appeared that he and the tenant's son Zygmunt had got it out and hunted it; it had crept into a corner behind the bath, and the two rascals had had no better or more amusing idea than to put a hose on the water-tap and syringe it out.

I took the animal out to dry it, but its nerves were so shattered it did not know me and bit me in the finger. Next day the monkey had a hollow cough, and in the afternoon it lay by the door of the cage and was very ill. I took it out and laid it on the table, and with a cry of pain it seized my thumb with both hands and looked up at me with a pleading look. Never have I seen such a human look in

any animal; it became a little sick child, whose life it was a question of saving.

The veterinary was sent for, and gave the monkey an injection with a little fine syringe and had it packed up in wadding; only its head and hands projected, and that made it still more human. No one who did not see it can understand how even the servants were affected by the death-struggles of this little animal. These small pleading eyes told of a soul which suffered, and the beseeching grip of its hands on our fingers was enough to bring tears into our eyes. We all felt the barrier between man and animal fall away. A child could not be more pathetic.

After a few hours the monkey died. The boy, the wretched little murderer, lay sobbing on the sofa.

This sort of thing seems meaningless now; but in those days these were great experiences.

VII

GRAND DUKES[1]: THE OLD MONSEIGNEUR

THIS time when Countess Janowska returned from the gaieties of the carnival in St. Petersburg to spend Lent in Warsaw, she had two experiences to remember, and was never weary of recounting them.

In the first place, this year the Tsar, not content with giving her a short audience one evening beyond the pillars, which in the great hall of the Winter Palace form the boundary between the members of

[1] In this and the following section the names are all altered.

the Imperial family and the other participators in the Court festivities, had one evening, when etiquette was relaxed and supper was served on small tables, taken the Countess to sit with himself. When in previous years he had never done so, she had always had to comfort herself with the thought: 'He dare not before the Empress.' There could be no doubt that the Tsaritsa must be aware of that short period in the life of the heir-apparent when Countess Janowska had been the favourite. But this evening the Tsar had dared to do it and been entirely bewitching. Was it this and the memories combined which caused the Countess to express herself so that instead of 'Sire' she had been so unlucky as to call him 'Monseigneur'? 'Just as in the good old days,' laughed the Tsar, when, blushing under her rouge, she begged pardon for the slip: 'the days I often gladly remember.' This had been heard by two other ladies at the little table, and had lighted a fire of envy in the court, where the shrewd and handsome Polish lady was anything but a favourite.

But the same evening she had yet another triumph. After a waltz, Grand Duke Nicholas Vladimirovitch told her that he wished to lunch with the Janowskis, when in March he passed through Warsaw on his way to the Riviera. In this case, too, evil tongues had declared that Countess Janowska's day was over, and that the joyous *amour* of the past was forgotten and gone. Those who had hitherto most confidently affirmed that the Grand Duke and not the Count himself was little Gucio's father were just about to declare that his Imperial Highness had never loved the

Countess more than with a passing flirtation. Now this *déjeuner* promised for March was to establish the fact that their friendship was and remained the same, and at the same time her rivals in the old Polish nobility were to be tortured with uncertainty whether they would be invited or not to this historic *déjeuner*. The selection was extremely fastidious; and the uninvited had to find a poor consolation in patriotic cavillings; was not this very Grand Duke Nicholas the worst enemy of the Polish nation, and could one in any case justify amiability towards this hard-handed Russian barbarian?

There was a busy time of preparation in the Janowski mansion, and had not the French chef Fernand been there with his quiet and skilful supervision, all would have been seized by a fit of the nerves, from the Count himself down to the thirty-five Polish good-for-nothings who filled the rooms, the kitchen and the stables with their bustling idleness.

The evening before his Imperial Highness was expected, I had leave to go out after 7.30 P.M., when my pupil, little Count Gucio, was put to bed. Outside the palace I took a cab to Krochmalna Street, where my former Polish teacher, Pan Wolinski, lived. As usual, Wolinski had no money, and was in high delight when I invited him to spend the evening out. 'Shan't we take Pan Trejdasievitch with us?' inquired Wolinski, and when I agreed, he knocked on the floor with a stick. Up came Pan Trejdasievitch, teacher without pupils, poet without connections, and dreamer of the brightest and most golden dreams that earth can give.

'Shall we go to the Europa or the Bristol?' said I.

'The Bristol, and supper at two roubles: that is how we shall get most for our money.'

Soon afterwards we rolled to and fro in a filthy cab over the frightful pavement of Krochmalna Street. Only when we got out into the brilliantly lit Krakowskie Przedmiescie with its wood pavement, did the carriage glide easily and comfortably.

'What the deuce is it? Garlands on the façade! Are you going to have a fête in the palace?'

'Grand Duke Nicholas is to lunch with us to-morrow,' I answered, not without a spice of the vanity of youth.

Pan Trejdasievitch bent forward and fixed his eyes on mine with a burning glance. 'If you are to eat with the creature, kill him! The devil! The vermin!'

Wolinski said 'Hush!' and pointed to the driver. Well, he was no longer dangerous but, as it happened, drunk, as Polish drivers generally are.

After supper at the Bristol, when much food and many glasses of beer and vodka had thawed the wits and limbs of the two famished fellows, Wolinski retired for a time, and Trejdasievitch leaned over the table and began to admonish me in whispers: 'You must do it, dear sir, you must! It is a question of the freedom of all Slavs. You will die, but if you dare it, you will live eternally in our dreams.'

In spite of my youth and radicalism I felt an uncomfortable feeling within me. 'It is quite

impossible, even if I had the will. I cannot shoot and do not carry a dagger.'

'Rely on me, I shall get you the stuff, good sir! We will drive Wolinski home—he must know nothing—and I will take you to a place where you shall get everything you require, something that any child can use.'

At the depth of my peaceful Danish soul there was a voice which laughed. I felt a certain satisfaction at knowing myself safe and at hearing my own courage, my own deadly peril and consequent immortality described. When his nauseous close body-smell began to annoy me, I moved farther away.

'Will you—or will you not? Think of Russia's freedom!'

'I am sorry, but I value more my own freedom.'

When Wolinski returned, Trejdasievitch relapsed into silence, and was soon rendered quite incapable by vodka drams.

All the same, his revolutionary talk had given a fresh charm and excitement to the anticipation of the Grand Duke's arrival. The day in March when I was to meet face to face 'Russia's worst executioner,' a piece of luck many young Russians would envy me, rose with a brilliant sun over snow-covered roofs. In the course of the morning walk with little Gucio we met everywhere officers in their smartest uniform and Cossack regiments, which trotted past on the little horses which with their bristling skins always reminded me of drowned mice. The 'nahajka' (whip with sharp spikes) jingled merrily at the wrists of the riders; to-day there might

perhaps be use for them. In the Krakowskie all traffic was stopped, and it was only our police-card that got us back into the palace, which lay to-day like a desert island, isolated in a sea of emptiness.

Exactly at twelve the people of the house and the guests assembled in the salon, and five minutes later his Imperial Highness came in. Big, broad, glittering in his uniform, he seemed to fill the room with fresh air, and his huge grey whiskers rose over the heads of the bowing gentlemen and deeply curtsying ladies. Such was the first vague impression of the great man.

More quickly than I had expected he had come up to us, bent down and kissed little Gucio on the forehead—a careful kiss on the brows, where he could not get his mouth full of hair-grease.

'But he looks quite well.'

'Pourtant il a les yeux un peu battus,' replied the Countess, whose domestic policy it always was to maintain that the boy was never well.

The Grand Duke felt his muscles, and turning to me, asked: 'Does he learn to fence?'

'Yes, Monseigneur.'

'It is a wonderfully fine sport, educative in more than one sense. Through it I learnt respect for women.'

'Oh, do tell us about it, Monseigneur,' pleaded the ladies in chorus. And the Countess added: 'You are so charmingly chivalrous, that we really must hear——'

'I had an excellent French fencing-master,' said the Grand Duke, while his hand passed down over his big reddish nose. 'One day I had said some-

thing disparaging of one of my aunts, and Monsieur Renouard there and then challenged me to a duel. I was to fight with glove and mask, he unprotected, and so we were on a level. I did my best to hit him, but in vain. When the lesson was over, my upper arm was bloody and gashed. I am grateful to him for it; he was the best of all my teachers. "That will teach you," he said, "in future only to speak well of ladies." A rule which it has been a pleasure to me to follow,' he added with a look and a smile.

It transformed his furrowed soldier face, this sunlight gleam of gallantry and grace.

Our two porters, Cossacks from the Ukraine in blue caftans with yellow scarves and martial moustaches, now drew apart the folding-doors to the dining-room. We were only twelve at table. Fernand stood behind the Grand Duke's chair and by look, nod and tiny movements of the hand directed the sixteen servants who waited in their gala dress—blue coats, white silk stockings and patent leather shoes. Many years have now passed, but I remember the whole impression—the bright light of a winter day outside, the warm twilight within the red-papered dining-room, and the golden reflections on the white cloth of the Rhine wine a hundred years old—but more than all, some characteristic features of the Grand Duke's conversation.

Count Janowski complained of nervousness when he woke in the morning, which was natural enough if one reflects that he played at his club every night till 6 A.M. The Grand Duke replied as follows: 'I will give you good advice, dear Count. When I feel myself indisposed of a morning, I order my

servant to fill the bath with broken ice. I can assure you that to stay only three minutes between pieces of ice is enough to restore one to health and vigour.' A shudder ran through the refined Polish society at the thought of this Muscovite cure.

I remember also that he described how he had suppressed a mutiny in a Poltawa regiment by simply having every tenth soldier shot. 'If we take care to maintain discipline, there will be no revolution in Russia.' The time that followed proved him wrong, but it was certainly due to Grand Duke Nicholas that the first revolution had no greater consequences. It was he who put courage into the Imperial Court, fortified his palace with cannon, and taught his servants how to use them. But it was also Grand Duke Nicholas who during the revolution robbed the pension fund for the widows of officers of over 300 million roubles. If things went wrong, he would thus anyhow not retire empty-handed. When he died the fraud was detected, and to conceal the scandal his heirs paid back by instalments 10 millions. The thousands of officers' widows all over Holy Russia will be the last to forget the doughty Grand Duke!

When subsequently I called to mind his face and figure, it occurred to me whom he resembled; one of those strong, muscular, long-bearded Assyrian kings whose lives are depicted in the extant reliefs. For them it was natural to be in danger of their lives. If the peril did not come of itself, they sought it in combats with lions in their great parks. Such was he, too: a giant, whose greatness must be measured by the standards of the past; a despot,

who felt himself raised above good and evil, who knew that where he went and stood dangers lurked, but felt his life richer and its enjoyments only the more wonderful on this background of plots and attempts on his life. No Western European can compete with such heroism; but it teaches us to understand that murder and self-devotion to death are the natural methods of fighting in Russia, while in our countries they are regarded as intolerable breaches of good and peaceful laws.

VIII

THE YOUNG MONSEIGNEUR

THE reception of the old Grand Duke had gone so smoothly because the French chef Fernand had arranged everything. But when the news came that his young son, Grand Duke Boris Nicholajevitch, would honour the country-seat of Janow with his presence for a few days in May, Fernand was already gone, having been called up for military service in his native country. In vain had the Count offered 10,000 francs: the French military laws are inexorable. Fernand was missed by the whole house, but especially by the Countess. He had been her comforter whenever a Russian Grand Duke or a Polish magnate was capricious or broke his oath.

'Is the Count never jealous?' I asked one day of the Austrian valet Alexander, who often came up in the evenings for a 'polite conversation.'

'Jealous? No, he blesses Fernand. Only young

married men are jealous. The old are glad provided they have domestic peace. When one does not feel oneself strong enough to rule one's wife with an oak stick, the best thing is to let her fall in love, preferably with some one in the house.' Alexander's cynical philosophy of life was founded on many years' experience.

The separation from Fernand was grievous anyhow, but there was the added misfortune that he was attached to a regiment in Algeria. Consequently the way seemed absolutely barred to a month of delight when the Countess visited Paris in June for the racing season.

Thus it was that everything went wrong with the preparations for Prince Boris's reception. Irritability and uncertainty prevailed everywhere, and it was only on the morning of his arrival that faces were smoothed and diplomatic smiles assumed.

On a brilliant May day he came driving up the old lime avenue to the castle, greeted by hurrahs from loyal peasants, who had been paid a rouble apiece to express the feelings of the neighbourhood.

Janow is a charming old rococo mansion, and no wonder that the last King of Poland preferred it to all his other palaces. Down in the cellars one is still shown the cool halls decorated with Pompeian frescoes, where in the heat of summer he was wont to spend the hours of noon; the garden hall is the finest in Poland; the silk upholstery of the furniture was embroidered by Poland's high-born beauties and presented to the King on his return from the war.

Here Grand Duke Boris was received, and here, where everything called to mind the old times of the monarchy, the noble fair ladies of Poland were arrayed round the young Russian, the scion of the oppressors, and tried to capture a look or a smile from him. Not one of them felt the chair-bottoms burn through their silk gowns, and out on the terrace the loyal regimental band from Warsaw played patriotic Russian airs. With smiles the various populations of Russia mingled in society. Here stood the young Prince Eristoff, son of a Ruler of the Caucasus, in confidential conversation with the elegant wife of the Governor-General; his father had fought with and fallen before the superior forces of Russia; the son had left the old robber-castle in the mountains and entered a Russian regiment, delighted with the liberal allowance, which enabled him to lead a wild life with wine and women. One evening, in a restaurant in Warsaw, I had seen him, drunk and grinning, break the glass mirrors on the walls, while the attendant followed, smiling and bowing, and took down the cost of the escapade. That evening I saw his real countenance, usually concealed by a veneer of civilisation.

The centre of everything was the merry nineteen-year-old Grand Duke, who had just left the cadet school and for the first time was allowed freely to bask in the smiles of women. How his laughter went out to match the spring weather outside as he stroked his tiny moustache and joked with Countess Janowska, who became young again in the reflection of his youth. I wonder if he knew

of his father's passion and if it amused him to take the first step in his father's footprints.

Déjeuner was served in the Moorish hall. Up in the gallery servants were turning the big coloured prismatic panes and making the shifting lights play over the gold-glittering uniforms and delicately coloured summer frocks. This flame dance of colours over the tables in combination with the crashing Russian military band gave to the whole the true stamp of Oriental festivity. Noisily the billows of conversation rolled upwards, and more quickly than the coloured lights the subjects changed; any seriousness would have been vexatious.

After the meal Countess Janowska formed a circle out on the terrace, beneath which large fresh plots of grass stretched down to the mounds behind which runs the Vistula. Grand Duke Boris, Prince Eristoff and numerous young officers overwhelmed her with compliments. Suddenly she beckoned for little Gucio and myself to come nearer.

'Do you know, sirs,' she said, 'that Gucio was very much offended because I dyed my hair to-day?'

To-day it was flaxen, though usually grey.

'It becomes you so admirably in this fine golden spring sun,' observed the Grand Duke.

'It sets off the complexion of your face,' opined another, and there followed a perfect cascade of compliments.

But the Countess frowned slightly, and with a capricious whim of coquetry she turned to me, the

most insignificant member of the party. Compliments have never been my strong point, but to-day I had a bright idea.

'The natural is always the most beautiful—especially with you, Countess.'

'Charming,' laughed the Countess.

Up went several monocles into the corners of the bystanders' eyes to examine the phenomenon; but I had already retired from the circle.

These few words caused me next morning to receive a message that his Imperial Highness desired me to take part in a game of tennis. The guests were gone, and the Countess appeared in a short childish sport costume. I was disgusted at the invitation because I played so badly, but Monseigneur found this exactly right; thus we could play against the Countess and the chances would be even. It amused the Grand Duke to show his expertness against the background of my bad play, and in a fatherly tone to give me, his senior, good advice during the game.

Afterwards we drank tea 'à l'hermitage,' and I was witness of Countess Janowska's heroic attempts to conquer one more generation. Only in the twilight after dinner did the *amour* begin to make headway. The Countess played and sang the bewitching little waltz which was then very popular: 'Tu renais à la vie par mon amour.' Later we took our evening walk through the dark avenues of the park down to the stables. The Countess clung to the arm of the Grand Duke and assured him that she believed in ghosts. The young man, however, in a patronising and teasing

tone, said it was a sign of degeneracy to believe in ghosts. The Countess looked in his eyes as a child might and said: 'How can you have the heart to call me degenerate, who am so confidingly simple that I believe in love, believe that one can be loved for one's own sake and eternally—eternally?'

I saw nothing of them for two days. On the evening of the third day we were again together in the salon, while the Count and the aide-de-camp sat out on the terrace drinking whisky and discussing race-horses. The Countess started and played once more 'Tu renais à la vie par mon amour.' But there was no renaissance of the *amour*. Away under the big silk curtain sat the Grand Duke; now and then he yawned, and the tone of his answers suggested a sleepy spoiled boy.

The Countess finished her playing with a run, in which a few wrong notes brutally broke through. Suddenly she asked, in a tone apparently of concern, but quivering with an undercurrent of mockery: 'You are perhaps weary, Monseigneur?' No, he was not weary, not in the least, rather the reverse. But he wanted to move, to take a walk. He made his way to the door.

Immediately the Countess was at his side. 'But you must keep your promise!'

'Of course.'

The next day he started off to Paris and fresh women, lucky young Grand Duke. Wherein consisted the promise I found out two months later in a 'polite conversation' with Alexander.

'Well, you see, when we got to Paris for the races in June, who should appear the very first

day in the hall of the Bristol? Why, Fernand! No other than Fernand! "How the deuce did you get here? Aren't you in Algeria?" "Yes, but I have got three weeks' leave." "Leave precisely for the three weeks we are to be here, and a few months after you were called up! That I call a miracle." "Well, it was in consequence of direct orders from the War Office, and, as far as I could understand, it came about on the basis of an application from the Russian Foreign Office." You see, that was how I understood what Grand Duke Boris could be used for.'

Alexander took a big puff of his cigarette, and concluded with the following observation: 'Yes, my dear sir, no ordinary person does anything of that sort. That only happens in our circles.'

I

A DAY IN ANCONA

THERE are days when life passes over our minds without depositing any impression, and probably the majority of them are like that; but there are others in which the abundance of events stamps the memory for good, the delight of which one feels while one experiences them, so that this feeling, that one stores up something which no later impression can destroy, makes even the actual experience more rich and heartfelt.

Among the days of my life which are fragrant with the joy of earth, one I spent in the Italian port of Ancona is especially dear to me, so dear indeed that I could hardly bear to see the town again without being too painfully reminded of the bygone delights of youthful travels.

The beginning of the day was certainly not promising. I had arrived with the Hungarian steamer from Fiume and wanted to go straight on to Naples by the express. It was due to leave at 10.15 A.M., and there lay the odious steamer swaying and lashing the water with its screw as if it had half a day, not half an hour, in hand. In desperation I stamped round the deck with my watch in my hand.

'Is it far to the railway-station?' said I to a friendly bearded gentleman by my side. I had inquired in French, but noticed by his answer that he was an Italian, and therefore put my further questions about the length of the customs examination and so on in his own language.

'You speak our language? What country are you from?'

'Denmark, sir.'

A young man equally interested appeared at his side. I hurriedly noted how handsome he was, but had no time for inquiries or observations.

I was the first to rush down the gangway and force my way into the customs house and get my trunk hoisted on the bench. But the Italian custom-house officers were in no hurry, not by any means, and they seemed to regard my haste as suspicious. In spite of my importunity and assurance that everything was in order, they insisted on a minute examination. At that moment the bearded Italian from the ship came to my assistance, and a few words from him were sufficient to set me free. After a brief expression of civil gratitude I rushed out to a cab. 'Make haste off; you shall have a good tip.' The driver was already on the box and waving his whip, the nag started off, and we swung round the corner—crash! There lay the poor jade with all four legs stretched out on the smooth pavement. Out I tumbled and called for a new carriage. But busy hands were already occupied with lifting the horse, others pushed me back into the cab, while over it all the driver on the box crowed and adjured me by all the saints to give him time. What with whipping and tugging the horse sprawled on to its legs, and I was in too much of a hurry to object to cruelty to animals. Like a balloon, the ropes of which are slipped by numerous hands, the cab flew on, amid a hurricane of grins and crackling applause.

The station clock showed four minutes past the time. But I was in full career, and nothing stopped me till I stood before the ticket-office, followed by a porter, and breathlessly asked for a ticket for the express.

'It is too early, sir.'

'Too early?'

'Yes, the train from the north is two hours late.'

I collapsed; should I laugh or weep? That I had not thought of it beforehand! Trains in Italy are always late. The clerk behind the pane was interested in my case.

'It is not a good train to get to Naples by. You will only be there at 1 A.M., supposing you get there with only another hour's delay. And if you are a stranger——' No, I had been there before. But he was right; it was a forbidding town to reach so late.—'On the other hand, there is a night-express at 10.15 P.M. That will get you there at 11 o'clock to-morrow.'

After a long discussion, the end was that I had my trunk carried to the cloak-room.

Again I stood in the square before the railway-station, made a big detour to avoid the grinning driver, and looked for somewhere in the Piazza to have a cup of coffee. The town seemed appalling. I began to feel bored and to regret having stayed. What should I do here? 'Is there a picture gallery?' Yes, there was one. I paid, and went out to look for it. In one of the narrow lanes I heard a joyous cry: 'Bon giorno, signore Danese!' They were the two Italians from the ship; their eyes were full of amusement and inquiry. I was

sensible enough to laugh at my own vacillation, and we introduced ourselves to each other and agreed to spend the day together. The elder of the two was called Tommaso Volero, a major in the garrison at Naples; the younger was his nephew, Lieutenant Jacopo Volero, of the Brindisi garrison. The older had grey hairs already in his black beard, the younger was in his twenties and as captivating a man as I have ever seen. Charming and bewitching as a woman, and yet masculine and fresh, a mixture of almost languishing grace and youthful mischievous boldness, which can only be found in the Latin races. In the course of the day I saw his dark eyes now meltingly tender when he passed a beautiful girl, now roguish as a child's, now sparkling with noble enthusiasm. He was a veritable young *ephebus*.

Most enjoyable was the afternoon when we drank our 'apéritif' under the plane trees by the shore. Suddenly Jacopo asked me if I knew Virgil, if I loved him, if I knew any finer poem written by the hand of man than the *Aeneid*. When I expressed a preference for Homer, he became excited. 'How dare you say that Virgil is not original? Why, listen, listen!' He began with rapid eloquence to declaim; his Italian pronunciation for a time made it difficult to recognise the passage: it was Dido's passionate lament. But I pitted Nausicaa against Dido. It was a regular battle of the bards, while the major with a Zeus-like paternal smile urged us on. But his heart was with Virgil, I could tell that; he was a Roman, a fellow-countryman, that was the point. But it gave me

a high idea of the Italian officer, this animated defence of a classic two thousand years old.

However, they were both remarkably absent-minded at dinner, and when the evening newspapers arrived, they forgot me and rushed upon them. Only when he saw my perplexed countenance did it occur to Jacopo to apologise and explain. 'See for yourself,' said he, and threw a newspaper over to me. I read a detailed description of a duel, which had been fought near Fiume the day before, between an Austrian captain of infantry and an Italian major, by name Volero. The subject of dispute concerned nationality; the Austrian had used a disrespectful expression of the Italian Army in a café in Trieste. Volero had sent for his nephew from Brindisi as his second, and the result had been a victory for the Italian arms, for the Austrian had had his shoulder split by a sabre-cut. The two Italians had succeeded in disappearing under the noses of the police, and, added the journal, 'have now returned gloriously to Italy.'

I lifted my hat and regretted that I had not suspected I had spent the day in the society of a hero. 'Hush!' said Volero, but the flattery obviously pleased him, and the nephew's eyes sparkled with enthusiasm when he described his uncle's courage and skill in fighting.

Soon afterwards two of the journalists of the town turned up at our table and invited us to the circus. I was taken, too, as the third hero of the drama, for they would not let me go.

Never shall I forget the reception in the crowded circus. No ruler can have been greeted with greater

enthusiasm. Every one got up at our entrance; from stalls to gallery rose cries of Viva for Italy, for the army, for the hero Volero, for the young second; finally one of the pressmen called for a Viva for 'il amico danese,' and the people roared without understanding a word. Addresses were delivered to us, the national anthem played and sung, before we were permitted to take our seats in our box. We did not see much of the performance; there were constantly people wanting to shake hands or ask us questions. At our departure fresh enthusiasm and similar ovations! The journalists drove us to the train, which, of course, was a few hours late, and entertained us at the railway-station.

At Foggia, where the lines to Naples and Brindisi diverge, we parted from Jacopo.

'Will you promise me to read Virgil again when you get back to Denmark?'

I gave my word, and he embraced me and kissed me on both cheeks: 'Addio, carissimo signore! Let us always be friends! Siamo sempre amici!'

'Always.'

II

UNQUESTIONABLY the Italians are the most amiable nation in the world, however much the tourists who have been taken in by professional scoundrels may maintain the opposite. Nowhere else in the world can one enter a crowded railway carriage in the middle of the night, among weary and drowsy people, and find favour in the eyes of the occupants. But in Italy the sleepers get up

to make room for the stranger and his luggage. Those who are going to get out at one of the following stations probably pack their things up by the window and evacuate their places before they are obliged. Not a black or evil look, and not a question whether there really is not more room in another compartment.

Here let me tell another story of what befell in the express from Rome to Naples. I was unlucky enough to lose my pince-nez, which fell down into a crack between the back cushion and the seat. When one of the Italians had noticed my vain endeavours to fish them out, he advised me to draw out the seat, and immediately two ladies and an elderly ecclesiastic left the carriage to give room to two Italians and myself to exert our strength. After much perspiration and pulling the seat came out with a crack, and the pince-nez were found in a deep layer of dust. But when the seat was shot back, the dust whirled upwards and filled the carriage. One of the young men was wearing a resplendent white summer suit, which at the end of the operation was smudged with grey. In vain did his young wife try to brush him clean in the corridor; he was and remained soiled. But I, who had from the first protested against the inconvenience I was putting them to and pointed to a reserve pair of glasses, and now in my unfortunate situation begged to excuse myself, got only bright smiles by way of reply, and even in the face of the young wife there was no sign of bitterness.

Go to Italy and learn politeness that comes from the heart. That night, too, when Major Volero

and I at Foggia entered the crowded Naples train, I had to own it true. No one knew us, but all helped to make room to accommodate us and our luggage. It was not possible to sleep. We sat tightly packed, and the animated scene of the evening before, the shouting crowd in the circus at Ancona, had affected our nerves. So we were sensible enough to converse before we parted for ever after a day's acquaintance. This we did in whispers and in French, in order not to be listened to by the other occupants of the carriage. I began by praising Jacopo's charm and manliness.

'Is he not very successful among the ladies in the society of Brindisi?'

'Yes! If only he is not stupid enough to fall in love.'

'But such stupidity would surely not be culpable.'

'I don't want him to be an ascetic. He is bound to fall in love, if only he does not marry for love. But I am afraid he will, high-flown idealist that he is.'

'Are all those who marry for love high-flown idealists? That would make it an exceedingly idealistic world that we live in.'

'Here in Italy they are happily still in the minority. Happily, I say. For there is no foundation on which to build marriage more uncertain than love.'

'On what should it be built?'

'On the sympathy of families.'

I looked at him in amazement.

'You do not understand me. Things have gone

so far with northerners that, not content with feeling admiration for the young, whose love wins the victory over the opposition of parents and family, they do not even understand how any attention can be any longer paid to these factors. This northern view of things is in process of becoming more prevalent with us, having first conquered France, where originally it was felt to be as unnatural as here.'

'I don't understand the danger of it.'

'That is because you northerners have not a scrap of our family feeling and because your life of amorous impulses is such a pale thing compared with our strong blind intuitions. You allege that you can keep your heads clear even while the longing is at its height, and can consider whether there are other requisites when the intoxication is slept off. Yet I doubt—I believe you are mistaken. What a wretched foundation it is for a common life lasting for years to like to kiss a young girl of eighteen when you are only twenty-two! No, a strong and deep sympathy between two families who have known one another and intermarried for generations, and the mutual examination of the families to see whether the young people are suited to one another, that, look you, is something to build upon. The mere fact that the two who are to be made one are brought up in the same surroundings and with one aim in life is worth much. But it is more important that they are fond of each other's family and can take a place in it. I don't care much for love; that is sure to come between two young healthy individuals. It is always there, like

the pleasure one takes in a good glass of wine and a barrel of oysters.'

'Still I cannot understand why you attach so much value to family feeling.'

'Because it is like the stamp the young people have received, in childhood, in memories, in all the spiritual and corporeal atmosphere in which they can thrive best. To assert one's family is to assert oneself. If there is antagonism between the families, it will engender conflict and discord between the two who ought to be joined in a common way of thinking. Fancy a man of an imaginative family, which worships beauty and delights in art, united to a woman from a healthy, active, rich family of Calabrian proprietors tied to the soil, accustomed to weigh their fellow-men by gold and real estate, unable to understand that wealth of ideas and daring which fills a young man —let us say of the type of Jacopo. Don't imagine that these are angles which can be rubbed off. From the first day to the last, there is constant conflict between the spirit and family of the man and the woman. In the north she generally conquers—your husbands are usually henpecked. But it is a Pyrrhic victory. Never does the struggle and bitterness die out in the depth of the heart. In this atmosphere the children have to grow up. Only don't tell me that your northern marriages are more successful than those which among our people are now based on the same foundation. The view that you now are trying to force on us, under the label of a superior civilisation, is the same which destroyed marriage and morals

in ancient Rome. You will find her again in Juvenal's satire, the emancipated woman who has fallen in love and made her own choice and fills her husband's life with worry and hatred, hates his friends and drives them out of the house, and destroys his life by only thinking of herself. And this folly, which buried our ancient civilisation, we are to accept with grateful reverence from the north! No, thank you!'

I understood from his tones that bitter personal experience lay behind his words, and he read it in my eyes, for he suddenly said: 'Yes! I am myself a victim of the new spirit from the north. But don't believe that I draw conclusions from my own case alone. There are already enough marriages for love in Italian towns to enable us to judge of the result. And don't fancy that the woman is any happier, even if she takes her part with greater self-assertion and too often conquers in the evil inward family struggle which lays waste hearts and homes.'

'But can't all this be adjusted and made right? It is still a transitional phenomenon, but——'

'No, only a reaction is possible. We must give up all the permitted flirtations which at present lead to the haven of marriage and once more let the families, the seniors who dispose of the experience of a lifetime, arrange marriages. This will now be done with deeper understanding of the soul; that we have gained by going astray. Previously material considerations were too often the motive. But this is the way we shall proceed; the family and common sense must decide, and the north will

act most wisely in following us and recognising our view to be right.'

I could not help smiling at his wrinkled forehead, and said, alluding to the duel at Fiume: 'Is this a new challenge to the north?'

He laughed and took my hand: 'Yes, but not to you. I say like Jacopo: Siamo sempre amici! Let us always be friends!'

III

THE MOTHER OF THE WORLD

THE villa was only one of the many with which the thirst for beauty in old families has decorated the Eternal City and its environs. From the central seven hills the country villas spread to the Janiculum and Monte Mario, to Frascati and Tivoli. Shady parks and extensive views, gigantic trees and foaming fountains have set a stamp upon these paradise-like dwellings, in which the romance of the Renaissance, which is fragrant to us in the pictures of Botticelli and burns in the mysticism of Savonarola, has found its softest and most bewitching expression. Here the great men of the past sought repose and consolation; here the restless financier and the politician craving for power were changed into Maecenases of fine feeling, who endeavoured to translate riches and power into the imperishable values of art and spirit. And here, too, the wanderers of to-day find consolation and repose in living with the great memories of the past.

Only few modern men can live a life that fits harmoniously with the suites of rooms and the gardens of such an old Renaissance villa. But to these few belonged the family Holty in the Villa Orsi on the Janiculum. Its owner was of an old family of Bavarian nobility, sturdy and imposing, serious and well-informed when the conversation turned on the chief interest of his life, the antiques of Rome, and captivating with a surprisingly bright smile when, with lifted wine-glass, he bade one welcome at the hospitable table where the diplomats and the savants met together. But the Villa Orsi got and gets its distinctive character from its mistress, the remarkable old Russian Princess.

It was a hot day in spring when I ascended the Janiculum for the first time and amid my exertions cursed my excessive thriftiness which had prevented me from engaging a carriage in time. When I caught sight of the villa, I stood still in confusion. Ten or twelve carriages were standing in a row before the iron railings, against which were leaning chattering and smoking footmen, while stiff coachmen sat tight on their high box-seats. It must be a great festivity, and I was anything but in my best clothes, and my shoes were smothered in dust. What carriages! Charming broughams with noble coats-of-arms, and the insides lined with yellow, white or golden silk.

With hesitation I rang, being stared and grinned at by impudent louts of lackeys; but the simple Italian housemaid, who opened the door to me, restored my courage. Yes! The master was in the library. No! there was no entertainment going

on. The mistress received visitors every afternoon, sometimes still more numerous.

The old German archaeologist gave me a cordial reception in a library which was full of the old literature of his subject, such a collection as could only have been brought together by one who had been contemporary with the researches of half a century while a survey of them was still possible. We talked about common friends, about studies and books, about Rome, which lay in front of the windows in the golden afternoon sun. I could see how fortunate he was in having lived his life face to face with the great memories of Rome, and untroubled by the pettiness and painfulness of earning his daily bread, a life so rich that the thought of parting with it must needs cause heartache. 'Now let us go out to my wife and have tea. You will have to use all the living languages you know, and even more,' he laughingly added.

A big garden table was covered with a plain cloth out on the terrace, and there sat a small company of the elect of the earth, richly dressed ladies and stylish gentlemen, and in their midst the most remarkable woman I ever saw, the old Russian Princess.

She was, as was said with perfect truth, the stoutest and wisest woman in the world. When she drove out, completely filling the back seat of the carriage, the little Roman street boys called out: 'Ecco la madre del mondo!' (See, there is the mother of the world!)

Everything in her exterior was remarkable. Her hair was parted in the middle and fell in half-

length over both shoulders, framing a queenly countenance with large noble features. Her attire was a grey dressing-gown with red collar, and she supported her hands on a big oak stick. Zahrtmann might have used her as a model for Leonora Christina. She had adopted the doctrines of Tolstoy in her youth, and in spite of her rank and the requirements of fashion she had insisted on appearing in this attire at all the Courts of the world, and, be it noticed, without any one smiling at her strange appearance. She was in soul and spirit, in her gigantic stature and the high-born stamp of her countenance, the born superman, the mother of the world, the great and good fairy of the nursery-tale, at whose knees the dwarfs of mankind gathered to lay before her their joys and sorrows. She was the great all-embracing feminine soul which had incredible knowledge of art and life; her acquaintance with men reached from America to Siberia, from emperor to peasant, and her heart could contain and bear the sorrows of a world.

I saw her often in Rome, and heard much about her, which I will now relate. Every morning also had its drive and its visitors. They came to the Princess one by one, invited in, one after another, in the order of arrival; a queen herself had to wait till it was her turn. In her little room she received the confessions of each in succession. Women came to her whose husbands had been unfaithful and with sobs confided all to her, and allowed themselves to be directed and treated like children according to her advice. Mothers came to her who had lost their little ones, and she had

tears and comfort for each alike. Young gamblers who had lost a fortune crept to her and, pale and trembling, begged her to intercede with their families. She might even herself drive the sinner home and ward off the blow.

Silent, strong and mysterious, the 'mother of the world' sat up there in the Villa Orsi and restored desolated human fortunes and stunted human wills. But in the afternoon she gathered to tea all the men and women her rich heart had room for, and here assembled princes and aristocrats, savants and artists for gay and festive conversation; even the King and Queen were often there, and Madame Holty knew how to make every one feel that he or she was especially near to her. There sat people whom she had helped and comforted, and others who were merely attracted there by her clear intellect and sportive wit, and she received them all alike, remaining seated like the queen-mother she was, but putting an infinitude of goodness into a look, a smile and a pressure of the hand. She was always the leader in conversation, quickly passing from German to English, from French to Russian, from Italian to Polish. But all went so rapidly that the intervals in which one was unable to follow seemed very short.

The very first day it struck me that she herself touched neither cakes nor tea, and that almost every lady brought a white packet, which she silently laid in front of the Princess's place.

The old lady caught my look and asked: 'What do you think is in these bags?'

'Perhaps nosegays.'

'Nosegays!' she snorted scornfully. 'What should I do with nosegays? No, it is hay.'

I looked at her doubtfully.

'Yes, hay! I live on hay, and my friends know that and bring it me. Look!' She opened a packet. 'Nice fresh grass straight from Princess Baldinucci's lawns.'

I have never been able to make out whether she mystified us or really ate hay in private. But we kept up the fiction, and the caprice caused the noble ladies to bring whole stores of hay in their silk-lined carriages. To all it seemed quite natural that Madame Holty did not eat and drink like ordinary mortals, but was nourished directly on the grass and herbs of the earth, and those who asked for an explanation got it in the single word 'Tolstoyan.'

She could also be on occasion very sharp. I have brought a reprimand on myself. We were talking of a Russian Grand Duke, and I declared I had seen him ten years before. 'But then he was still quite green.' 'Green as your tie, perhaps?' said the lady crushingly. I was wearing a very pronounced tie, and in future I took good care not to wound the feelings of the loyal old lady by disrespectful allusions to her Royal Family.

In the second year of the Great War old Holty died, the only German allowed to remain in Rome after the entry of Italy into the war. Queen Helena took him under her special protection, and the two old people could live on safely at Villa Orsi. The old Princess is still alive, and may she live long after the end of the war. For up in the

noble old nest with the 'mother of the world' the poor sad children of the belligerent nations will be able to meet again, and reach each other's souls and hearts in her little private room, and gather for intellectual banquets on the terrace of the Villa Orsi, in the shade of the pine trees, face to face with the softest romance of the Renaissance, and with great Eternal Rome below at the foot of the Janiculum.

HELLAS

I

AN AUDIENCE WITH KING GEORGE

IN the summer of 1903 the waves were running high in the internal politics of Greece. Sly old Delyannis had been defeated in Parliament, and King George had dropped him and appointed the honourable and capable statesman Theotokis as premier. The change of ministry was discussed in all the cafés; sensible Greeks were glad of the exchange, and hoped it would last and that this time the king would stand firm. For it was clear to all that Delyannis would find some way of getting back to power. The last time he was defeated he concocted famine and insurrection in Arcadia. What news was now to be expected from the Peloponnese, which the old fox had completely under his thumb, partly because he was born and bred in Arcadia, partly because the peasants all admired his mean ways?

The answer came as follows: in a few days the wine-growing districts of the Peloponnese raised an outcry for a monopoly in currants, which should secure to the growers higher prices for their grapes. That same evening all the Delyannists in Athens were bawling for a monopoly; apprentices and boot-blacks were calling out monopoly without having the faintest comprehension of what it meant, and letting off their revolvers in every street, so that it was dangerous to go out. If you asked one of these youths what it was all about, the answer was uniformly: 'The old man has said it.' Next morning the newspapers reported the outbreak of

insurrection in the Peloponnese, and a telegram was addressed to the King by the peasants of those parts demanding the removal of Theotokis. In the afternoon Theotokis fell, and the King appointed as his successor one of Delyannis's tools, Rhallis. There had not been time to do what generally happened in changes of ministry, remove the whole crowd of Delyannist officials and fill the vacancies with Theotokists. As a rule, these changes were carefully planned and radical, embracing all classes —from professors at the University to lamplighters; but so quickly had Theotokis been overthrown, that the Delyannists remained in office after a few days of anxiety. Not a word more was heard about insurrection and monopoly. The wonderful Greek discipline, which can be traced in the home towards the master of the house, in the village towards the demarch, and in the party towards the politician of the locality, had triumphed once more. The foreign King had not and could not have any strong hold on the masses of the people such as his son acquired later merely because he was 'our Constantine.' Delyannis did not scruple to revenge himself by adding a further humiliation to the King; for his man of straw, Rhallis, enforced his demand that the Crown Prince Constantine should be retired for a time from the army.

It was while all this was going on, that we four Danes in Athens were granted an audience with King George. We lived in a little Greek hotel, and up to that time had not attracted any attention; but the day that the royal flunkey appeared and distributed letters among us, we became an object

of curiosity both to the landlady and all staying in the hotel, and, as the only one of our party who could speak the language, I had to give a full account of our relation to 'Giorgios' down in the vestibule. The same evening we got some very necessary instructions from a fellow-countryman, who had known the King for many years. 'Do not forget that the King cannot stand any hard language about the Greeks, however contemptibly they may be behaving at the time. Perhaps he may think fit himself to make some observations; but don't be tempted to try and please him by describing the Greeks as a pack of robbers.'

The appointment was for 12.30, and soon after midday the cab stopped before the hotel. The gentlemen—the composer, the graduate, and myself—were in evening dress, the composer's wife in an elegant walking costume. As we drove, we discussed the order of succession, and agreed that the composer and his wife must go in first, and we two others would probably go in in alphabetical order. Our spirits were excellent, except that the graduate was distressed by his lack of white gloves, and insisted on borrowing my right-hand glove, as according to etiquette I must not offer a gloved hand to the King.

In the ante-room we were received by the aide-de-camp, who, after having consulted a big register, ordered the graduate to be ready to go in first. We conjectured therefore that we should go in in alphabetical order, and as in that case I should be last, there was nothing to prevent me from lending the graduate the coveted white gloves, which accord-

ingly was done. So it was a very uncomfortable surprise to me when the aide-de-camp, after the graduate had disappeared, made a sign to me that my turn would be next. Thus my good nature had separated me from my most valuable possession, the gloves. What could I do but take up my position close to the door and literally strip the gloves off the graduate when he returned after a few minutes had elapsed ? But it was not amusing under the eyes of a discreetly smiling aide-de-camp and an impudently grinning Greek porter.

With the left-hand glove half pulled on, I stepped through the folding-doors. The first room was empty and carpeted ; between the two folding-doors that followed was a piece of quite smooth wood floor, and just when I was on that, I caught sight of the King at the end of the next room. Thus the first bow had to be made while one was picking one's way to the carpet of the next room. I suspect that King George, wag that he was, deliberately selected for coming into view this smooth and slippery surface, to receive the bows and involuntary comic movements produced by the situation ; and my fellow-countrymen agreed with me that this was the only uncomfortable moment of the audience.

What did we talk about in the quarter of an hour ? We began with modern Greek ballads, and so with aristocratic nonchalance glided through fifty subjects. The King talked about Crete and the departed King Minos, whose palace had been found at Knossos, who cruelly threw charming young Athenian girls to be devoured by the Mino-

taur. That gave rise to the question, what I thought of Greek girls. I answered that they seemed to me too undersized and prematurely stout; but the King warmly defended Greek women: 'There were charming girls in Athens.' Then we passed on to Greek agriculture; the King laughed at the old-fashioned Greek implements, wooden ploughs and sickles, and described his vain attempt to introduce threshing-machines. Remembering my warning, I did not join in the conversation about the less heroic qualities of the Greeks. At last we reached the King's favourite subject, his stable of cows at Tatoi. It cost him 14,000 drachmae a year by reason of the expense of feeding-stuffs, but it was the great joy of his life. I suspected—and as a farmer's son I can well understand it—that the King often took refuge in the nice warm stable with the Danes who were employed there along with Greeks, to seek consolation and forgetfulness amidst the antagonism and spitefulness of political life. One small feature is very characteristic of King George as the true-born son of the Danish countryside. When he drove to Tatoi, he always got out at the steepest inclines to spare the horses; and when the courtiers in the other carriages were slow to follow his example, the King usually said: 'You are getting so fat and stout, gentlemen! It will certainly do you good to take a little exercise!'

But one thing I must not forget: in the course of the conversation King George had acquired exact information about everything which the famous composer, who was to follow me, had written and

had performed. When the composer came out of the audience-chamber he had grown three inches, and with his hand on his breast he declared: 'He knew me so well. Every iota I have written he was acquainted with. He was an uncommonly interesting and well-informed King.'

II

THESSALY

THE great summer heat had lasted two months but not longer. For the end of May 1903 had been freshened by frequent torrents of rain, which was something unusual for that season of the year in Athens, and their breath made even the first days of June comparatively cool.

It was my first summer in the south, so I began to think that all I had been told of Athens' frightful summer heat was a myth, constructed by northerners afraid of warmth. But then the heat took hold; the first days were still followed by cool nights, so that one bore one's fate with a smile. But by the longest day of summer the night became a torture; I lay naked under a sheet and could not sleep till near the morning, and when I woke, my pillow was so wet that it could be wrung. I summoned up all my northern heroism and systematised my twenty-four hours. I got up at 4.30 A.M. and took the 5 o'clock train to Phaleron to bathe in the sea. Invigorated by the salt water and the morning coolness, I went back at 8 to a light breakfast of grapes and bread, or 'giaourti'

and bread. Thus I succeeded in working, either in shirt-sleeves in the library, or entirely naked with a towel round my waist at home, till 12 o'clock, and after a second light repast concluded the first half of the day with a long, restless and perspiring siesta. The second half began at 5 P.M. with a cup of chocolate and whisked egg, then work till 8 P.M., dinner and a siesta till midnight on Constitution Square.

It was a good plan for a while; at times it seemed as if one were living one's life twice over; but when it had lasted two months my power of resistance was gone, my excursions to bathe became less frequent, and dust and boredom wasted blood and spirits.

Accordingly I eagerly accepted the invitation of the German doctor to accompany him on a tour into Thessaly. The sea-voyage and the mountains were sure to revive my spirits. On the appointed morning I turned up on board a steamer in the Piraeus, and was not a little astonished to find the travelling party increased by two ladies, a thirty-five-year-old Greek lady and her daughter of seventeen. A cousin of theirs was to have come too, but was prevented at the last moment, and after much hesitation and vacillation the ladies had determined, notwithstanding, to go, directly against Greek ideas of propriety. Confound it, we were surely Europeans, were we not? Well, I have never believed in the cousin; and certainly a match was made between the German doctor and the Greek widow. He fell a victim to that boredom in Athenian high life which drives so many young

Europeans, diplomats and savants into the snares of the cunning Greek ladies. Moreover, the widow was not amiss, and in intellect and knowledge far superior to the natives of her town.

But that he, the handsome German doctor, who was ten years her junior, did not prefer the daughter was a puzzle to me. For she was the most beautiful young girl I have ever seen. Her face had the oval shape and the pure complexion with a slightly yellowish under-tint which the French painters a century ago gave to their fair Greek and Oriental women, and which I have very seldom seen in life, with that wonderful modelling of nose and mouth which can only be described by the commonplace phrase, as lovely as a picture. Her hair was chestnut-brown, her smile and the melodiousness of her voice, the erectness and flexibility of her young newly ripened body, the soft languorousness of her dark eyes, the silent delicate grace of her movements—thus the impressions chased each other, and during the eleven days we were together I was never tired of seeing, hearing and admiring. Most bewitching was she when she laughed, and it was significant that she laughed loudest when the inconveniences of the primitive travelling made us two Europeans complain. She bore all discomforts with a royal good temper, the horrible food, the vermin in the hotels and the hard wooden saddles without cover which she had to ride. She laughed when evening after evening we ate tough goat's flesh with tin forks, or had to allay our hunger and thirst with tomatoes for a whole day. But when in our outward passage we had rough weather,

and a heavy sea drenched all four of us though we were sitting on the bridge, then we two Europeans laughed, for the sun in a quarter of an hour dried our white clothes upon our bodies ; but Irene cried at first, for her hair and dress were equally crumpled : and that was the only thing she could not bear, to see her appearance ruined.

That is why I did not fall in love, though there were occasions enough ; a moonlight evening in a monastery at Trikkala, where the Peneios was flowing silently in the dark valley, which had not a single glimmering light—I could not but think of the antithesis, the Rhine valley viewed from the Drachenfels by night, with its thousand twinkling, moving or fixed lights. The moon was over the chain of Pindos, a real Oriental half-moon with stars round it, as if it were a gigantic Turkish ensign lifted high up over the mountains. Spirit-like, mysterious, almost menacing seemed the dark cliffs on which lay the monastery, but all sense of discomfort disappeared before the gentle and gracious breath of the night wind ; it permitted no romance, no shudder, any more than the unwooded mountain-sides. 'Die mondbeglänzte Zaubernacht,' the moonlit magic night, the favourite motive of romance, requires a colder blast and wooded valleys sunk in fog and thicket.

Something of this sort I had said, but she did not understand it. That saved me from destruction that evening. The day after was worse, when we two were hoisted up in the same net to the monastery of the Holy Trinity, which was situated on such a steep rock that no other access was

possible. Laughing, we were hauled in by a side-door several hundred metres high, and plainly enough annoyed the grave monks who were turning the winch. They breathed more freely when they got us into the net again and lowered us down into the abyss like two floundering hens.

We concluded our journey at Portoriá, which is in the Pelion mountains, half a day's ride from Volo. Here we lived in the inn, and took our meals in the square; the widow made her own purchases and had the food prepared, under the inspection of herself and her daughter, by a woman who lived in the square and was quite unknown to us. These meals were the greatest object of the town's curiosity; we had all—from the old women to the infants—as spectators and admirers.

Then my three companions departed and I was left alone, for the first time alone with people who spoke only Greek. But the loneliness proved not so bad; the schoolmaster asked me to live with him, and in his hospitable house I lived three weeks, waited on by an old serving-maid called Kalliope. I was only permitted to pay the bare cost; it came, reckoned in Danish money, to 80 öre a day.

But I readily admit I starved. Up here in Portoriá, 2000 feet above the sea, the mountain air restored my northern appetite, but I could never get it satisfied. As early as 7 A.M. the lady of the house brought me with a curtsy a plate of sweetmeats, of which etiquette forbade me to take more than a spoonful. A quarter of an hour later Kalliope came with coffee and a tiny bit of dry bread. I was then studying modern Greek super-

stitions, especially stories of spectres and vampires, and Kalliope was a literary source of the first order; she knew all about them and had even taken part in scalding them with boiling vinegar on graves at midnight. Every day she brought fresh stories, which I spent the morning in taking down. Breakfast at 12 o'clock was mutton or goat's flesh, on fast days two stuffed tomatoes and rice, followed by cheese and pears. Two hours afterwards I was wellnigh wild with hunger; and then began calls in the company of the schoolmaster: we visited the house of every single well-to-do citizen of Portoriá, but the entertainment was everywhere the same, a spoonful of sweetmeats. Most attractive was our reception in the big yards of the houses, often under one of the many plane trees, where the inmates gathered, each carrying his seat, old and young, women and children of all ages; it was astonishing what a family such a house could contain. For the most part the men were on commercial journeys in Egypt and Turkey; the few who were left we met in the café at 4 P.M. Here one could get coffee and sweet 'loukoumi,' but one day when I asked for bread and cheese I embarrassed both host and guests: it was an unheard-of requirement. While my stomach cried out, and my brain drew pictures of salmon or prawns with buttered rolls, I had to debate the high politics of the East, discuss the murder of the King of Serbia or describe Denmark. Only on one of the last days did I find, in an out-of-the-way part of the village, an inn where the shepherds came for meals; there I could get a piece of bread,

sometimes a little goat-cheese, washed down by water. On bread and water I recovered my happiness in idyllic Portoriá.

III

DELOS

THE morning had been hot and still, but at midday the wind woke up and the sea began to toss. We had been able to foresee a change long before, for Paros, which at sunrise was brilliantly illuminated to the south of us, was soon afterwards enveloped in a cloud of dust. Our old boatman, Pascha, who in winter is the sole inhabitant of Delos, and therefore prides himself on knowing the island better than any one else, had been the first to notice the change in the weather, and had warned the people who were working in the excavations, 'To-day you will work in dust!' But at that time the island itself, and Kynthos, its only height, which modern Greeks call Kástro, were lying in smiling sunlight between blue straits.

The wind to begin with could only be perceived in the sound in front of the old sacred harbour. That became somewhat lighter in tone, and there were indications that something was issuing forth from clear cold sources deep down. Soon after, the surface was broken into tiny glittering wavelets, over which came and went streaks of foam rapid as dreams. But a few hours after midday great flakes of white foam rolled wildly over the pebbles and sand of the shore, the billows went a long journey

northwards in black desperation, tried to mount the cliffs, tumbled down again and raced on, scattering spray and chill in the air, so that the warm power of the sun was quite broken. Over the whole area of the excavations drifted the luminous bone-dry mould, which struggled into the clothes and made the eyes smart; the workmen strove long to resist it, but at last threw down their picks. The foreman understood that there was nothing to be done but sound the whistle, as if it was already time to leave off work. The tips stopped in the middle of the rails, the horses were unharnessed and, inwardly rejoicing, the workmen staggered through the storm to their small temporary barracks under the northern slope. The wind caught them in the neck and pushed them onward, and they laughed and shouted like children.

Then one of them cried aloud, a real cry of pain. So loudly did he lament that, in spite of the hurricane, everybody heard him. We hurried up. He squatted there and moaned. He had trodden on the backbone of a fish, which by carelessness had been thrown high up on the land, and his bare foot was bleeding. A moment after two comrades had seized him by the arms, and accompanied by the whole crowd he was led off to the headquarters of the party to be bound up.

The only one who stayed behind was Pascha, who with the gesture of a connoisseur was examining the sun-dried fish which had caused the mishap.

He looked at me, nodded and smiled: 'I am sorry. But it might have been much worse. In the sea there lives another fish; men seldom see it

and have not given it a name. I myself have only seen it once in my life. But when you tread on it, you must go up on Kastro and cry aloud, like the Arab who cries his "Il Allah," before you get relief to your pain.'

It was seldom that Pascha said so much at once, and this and the strangeness of the expression came over me. 'You know the sea, Pascha?' I said.

'Know the sea!' he laughed. 'Who should know the sea better than I? I have sailed since I was a boy, first in my father's, and then in my own, caïque. And I have seen more than men generally think of seeing.'

I got him to sit down. Now the iron was sufficiently hot, and it was time to strike. There was a novel brilliance on his face, which, usually puckered and imbecile, was hidden under the great grey poodle-like beard, but now showed delicate, almost child-like features, which I had never previously noticed.

Of his past I only knew the story, how twenty years ago he had deserted his wife and two small sons to go a long voyage. When a year had passed, the wife began to yearn for him and determined to start in search at haphazard. Pascha could not write, and to get others to write letters for him never occurred to him. She left the lads behind at Mykonos under the care of an old grandmother, took a position as cabin-attendant on a Greek sailing-ship and visited first the harbours in the Black Sea, without result, and then the western Mediterranean as far as Marseilles. There she got to know that Pascha was a boatman in Hungary,

and was going up and down the Danube in a barge, and after a year's search found him married to a Hungarian woman. But without particular unwillingness Pascha followed his lawful spouse, and when finally, after a long time, they reached Mykonos she bore him a daughter, the fruit of the first joy of recognition. Since then Pascha's life had been quiet and exemplary, and had moved within the Cyclades, where he was less exposed to moral lapses.

'Have you heard the Sirens?' I blurted out, a little too hastily.

'No! If I had, I should have been down there, where it is full of cobwebs, and long since. Those who hear the Sirens die that very instant, like those who hear animals talk.'

'But how do we get to know that any one has heard them?'

'That we do know. That animals talk on Holy Easter-night is well known. All Mykonos believes it, and every man brings milk to his domestic animal that evening, but takes care not to stay and hear what they talk about when they have drunk the milk. As long as the world has lasted, men have known it and been careful.'

'But now the Sirens? What do they look like?'

'They are like fire to look at, and have three sharp serrated fins—one on the back as big as a tiller, one on the belly rather smaller, and one quite little on the top of the head. With these they cut in pieces the men they entice into the deep by their song, cut them first in three big pieces, then into smaller ones, and then into little tiny pieces with

the fin on their heads, for their mouths are only small, and they cannot otherwise eat human flesh. They sing both in storm and in calm weather. But they are not the only monsters who live in the deep. There are storm demons with manifold names, whose skin is thick and shining, like metal, and changes colour as the actual colour of the sea varies. Some have human heads, and all have big claws, horrible claws, which they bury deep in the gunwale of the boat, while they wind their bodies round the keel of the boat, and their tails about the prow of the boat to make it sink. Such are they, and I have seen them.'

'Have you seen them yourself?'

'Ah! and how often have they looked at me with their eyes over the gunwale! Most plainly I saw them off Sardinia.'

'But how did you escape alive from them?'

Pascha bent his head forward—in his beard sparkled the glittering sea-spray—and whispered, while he put his hand over his mouth to speak through the storm: 'I know pentealpha.'

'What is that?'

'The mystic sign which every seaman must know to save himself in stormy weather. That which alone causes the demons to let go their claws.'

'What is it? Is it a sign or a word?'

'That you will never get to know. Only seamen must know it, and never betray it to any one who is not a seaman. For then it will lose its power.'

'Pascha! Suppose I now offer you money? 100 drachmae?'

'One hundred drachmae is much money. But life is more valuable.' He became silent and apparently dejected. It was clear that there was a death-struggle in his soul between two points of view. But suddenly his face brightened again, and with a truly Greek foxy grin, while he made a big explanatory gesture, he said: 'But you might, of course, become a seaman, only for a few months, nay, only for a fortnight! Well, then, come again and offer me 100 drachmae. Eh? You understand me?'

IV

ARTISTES

I

IT was one evening many years ago in a circus in Athens. On my right I had a Greek, who one winter had studied gymnastics in Stockholm; on my left a little lively native of the Jutland country, who had been already six years in Greece. I was deeply impressed by all I had seen of fine art since my arrival in Hellas, and insisted on talking to the Jutlander about the Acropolis. But he declared he had never been up there.

'Six years in Athens and never on the Acropolis!' I exclaimed in dismay. 'Have you, then, never seen anything of the charming art in this country?'

'No,' he replied. And while he gave his fair moustache a twist up he added, with a scornful side-glance at me: 'Confound it; one is only once young.'

Even before I had taken in his answer, which I

shall never forget, a young actress, who stood in page's dress by the descent to the stalls, looked towards us and said: 'I understand Danish well.' She had just appeared as a Roumanian danseuse, so we were a little astonished. But with a dreamy look she continued. 'Denmark nice country. The gentlemen will probably not know an agent Jörgensen of Silkeborg?' The question put to us in the middle of Athens made us cough to conceal our amusement. It was comical to see the Greek teacher of gymnastics, who ruminated long, with wrinkled forehead, whether he had ever met agent Jörgensen from Silkeborg. 'He was a matchless man,' continued the lady indefatigably. 'I was engaged to him two years.'

We all three expressed our deepest sympathy, and the Jutlander introduced himself as being of the same neighbourhood as agent Jörgensen and invited the lady to supper after the performance.

Is it a relic of childhood's mentality in which princes and artistes are on a level in one's judgment? Or is it through the poetry of Herman Bang that I have got my interest in these birds of passage? In any case, as often as I met artistes during the long years of travel in my youth, I always felt attracted by them, and have never failed to listen to their conversation. Much giddiness and still more superficiality I have found in them, but also a goodness which would do honour to any position in society. Nowhere is there developed such a touching and loyal affection for old parents as among artistes; it is a matter of course that they take them about with them and maintain them.

The little Roumanian did not accept the invitation till we had promised to invite her mamma too.

The supper took place before a café in University Street, actually on the pavement, and lasted the starry night long. I regret that there was no phonograph at hand to record the wonderful Scandinavian talked that night.

Of the actual conversation I remember the long-winded description the young lady gave of her wonderful power of resistance to men when she was still quite young. It is the favourite subject of conversation with that class of ladies; they revel in the recollection of all their negative answers and all the fruitless wooing.

At last the Greek became angry, and struck the table. 'That is a lie!'

The Roumanian and her mother rose, affronted.

'Yes, certainly a lie! So long can no woman hold out!'

We intervened, and at last got the narrative terminated.

'Ah!' sighed the mother. 'The men are often very disagreeably nasty fellows.'

About dawn the Greek and the Jutlander began to quarrel as to who should be agent Jörgensen's successor. 'I'll cut your throat, you dog!" bellowed the Greek. 'I had not thought that our friendship would end thus,' lamented the peaceful Jutlander. But this, too, was adjusted, and the morning sun shone over a pale but united company.

II

On a steamer between Piraeus and Alexandria

'GOOD gracious! Are you Danish? Well, that *is* amusing!'

I did not myself think it was so amusing. Stella was as pronounced and bedizened a variety singer as could be. I cleared off as soon as it was possible.

Soon afterwards a young man in a fez approached and bowed to me, a mild, pale, thin young man. He introduced himself in French as a Turk and commercial traveller and continued thus: 'My name is—hm—bib!' I thought the fellow had a catch in his throat, and let him cough it out. He repeated: 'My name is—hm—bib!' Only when he repeated it the third time did I understand that he really was called something like Hem-Bib. After a short introduction about the weather prospects for the night, with a blush he confided to me that he had seen Stella appear at a variety theatre in Piraeus, had fallen in love with her and had taken the steamer in order to declare his feelings. As he heard I was a fellow-countryman, he begged me to plead his cause with her. He had quite honourable intentions, wanted to marry her and was in a good business in cotton. If I wished, he would give a detailed account of his profits.

With a smile I promised to state his case, and Stella, who now aroused my deepest interest, received the proposal with matchless roguishness. 'Oh, dear! how hard it is for a young girl who is

so alone in the world! Well, never mind, come with him. Let me have a sight of the creature.'

During the voyage of two days we formed a lively trio. Stella dealt unmercifully with the poor Turk, raised him to a heaven of bliss with a smile, and then threw him headlong into a hell of despair. It was worst for the Turk when she began to tell me stories in Danish. She had been all over the world, but the brilliant period of her life was when she was a favourite of one of the murderers of the King of Serbia. She had made his acquaintance during a rising in Belgrade, when the dashing officer at the head of a cavalry patrol had dispersed the crowd and carried off Stella's hat, worth 40 francs, on the point of his sword. The same evening he had turned up at the Variety and paid for the hat and more. After the performance he had introduced her to the exclusive circle of the murderers.

'That was a cavalier, I can tell you, sir, the sweetest and gayest cavalier in the whole world. They never asked what anything cost. We danced in a big mirrored room, and the men let off their revolvers at the ceiling so that the glass rattled down and through the ladies' trains. "Are you not afraid, mademoiselle?" one of them asked. "No," said I, "I am no queen!" Then they grinned, and my cavalier kneeled and said: "Queen of my heart." Yes; that was a cavalier, you may be sure.'

It was the last morning. I stood by the railing, and for the first time saw the coast of Africa, just as I had imagined it: palm trees towering

and playing over a shining yellow coast of sand. 'Goodness, it is Africa!' said Stella, and yawned. 'Well, I never saw Sweden so distinctly.' Unquestionably the spell was broken.

She rose to go down and pack, and I remembered my duties. 'What answer shall I give him?' I asked, with a look at the little cowed Hem-Bib.

'Oh! the little chit! Tell him that I will have him if I can always have him hanging to my watch-chain. If he is not satisfied with that, he must really go and drown himself. Good-bye!'

V

FROM THE LEVANT

AGAIN we are in the blue Levant! The ship comes in under the mountains of Crete, into the blue bay before white Kanea. Behind the town the mountains form great circles, which seem higher and darker the farther off they are. Among these mountains the Cretan Pallicars are fighting for liberty and self-determination, not with mouth or pen, but with powder and shot. We are in the Levant, where weapons are still found profitable, and where one human life or two, or hundreds, are lost without throwing the world out of gear. Here is a stronger sun, fresher blood and somewhat more primitive forms of intercourse than with ourselves.

Bad enough had been the two days' voyage from Catania. The Mediterranean, which is usually like old Horace, quick to be angry and quick to become mild again, had chafed the whole time,

wrestled with the dilapidated Italian steamer and thrashed it from side to side till we thought the end was near. Even in the bay of Kanea the swell could be felt: we saw it by the boats, which came buzzing like flies and stuck fast to the sides of the hull. But we ourselves got a respite, and met in full numbers for the first time at breakfast. It was like a meeting beyond the grave, so white and chastened were the faces of all. This was the first appearance of the Italian missionary priest, whom I had seen take leave of his family at Catania. He was bound for Constantinople to convert the Grand Turk: so it was not odd that he and the whole family sobbed so that it could be heard high up in heaven. He was a fine man, with a long curly beard and gentle, bright, childlike eyes. Next to him came the Turkish officer, who had told me the first day that he had read a big book in French about a Dane who endeavoured to reach the North Pole, whose name he could no longer remember. But otherwise he knew the whole book by heart. He was accompanied by his sister, who was a real beauty according to the statement of our steward, but she had been shut up in her cabin for the whole voyage from Genoa. The last who rose from the dead was the Italian sculptor, Signor Giambaldi, a little, round and jolly gentleman of forty-two.

He threw himself down on his seat, clutched the bottle, poured out a glass and drank. 'Ah! this glass of wine, Signor . . . don't you think it is like the first kiss in life?'

He caught sight of the priest and was somewhat embarrassed. But the priest laughed with a fresh,

pleasant, childlike laughter: 'Ah, Signor, don't boast! You can no longer remember that.'

The Turk as usual took a helping of macaroni, and rose to take it in to his sister.

'Is she coming out to-day?' asked Giambaldi.

'No, she is not to come out to-day.'

'I am sure she is suffocated in that frightful hole. Let her have leave to breathe a little fresh air; it will do her ever so much good.'

'It will be good for her to stay where she is,' said the officer, pushing the door ajar, and passing in the macaroni.

After breakfast we gathered in a boat at the stern of the ship, and the conversation was resumed where the thread had been so painfully broken two days before.

'It was a very interesting description of travel,' said the Turk. 'And he got farther than any one had got before, to 84 degrees of northern latitude.'

This mysterious fellow-countryman began to interest me.

'Can't you remember what his name was?' I asked.

'No; but he was a very fine man, and he talked seven living languages. Besides, he was possessed of an iron energy.'

Meanwhile the sculptor had brought out some cuttings from French newspapers to show me how famous he was. He passed a scrap to me, and I read: 'Much interest was caused by Giambaldi's group, "The Kiss." No one can represent the female body like this sensuous Italian; he caresses the flesh, he fills it with spirit, he puts his longing

and his pain into it. One can fancy one hears him sob . . .'

'The "sensuous Italian"—that means me,' explained Giambaldi.

'But when he reached the 84th degree,' continued the Turk, 'then . . .'

Giambaldi showed me a fresh cutting. 'The most beautiful woman at the races yesterday was Countess X. I doubt whether even our delineator of women *par excellence*, Giambaldi, has seen anything to compare with her among the numerous models that set in motion his artistic fancy . . .'

'Now one would expect, would one not, that at 84 degrees of northern latitude there would be perpetual ice? But, on the contrary, there was sea, open sea.'

The Italian hands me a photograph of a wonderfully handsome Spanish lady. He points to the picture with one hand and lays the other on his heart. 'Is she not beautiful? And she is mine . . . entirely!'

'But it was only possible, thanks to sledges drawn by dogs. Otherwise he would never have succeeded in getting so far.'

The priest, seized by a fit of merriment, moves aside.

'Pain,' says Giambaldi, 'is it not so? Pain and pleasure between them feed the artist's soul. Oh! but first and last the deep eternal pain . . .'

He stops in the middle of his pain and his face changes its expression. 'Voyez, voyez, comme elle est délicieuse!' *She* is a little Turkish woman, dressed in black silk, and with the sweetest white

ivory face under the black veil, who suddenly makes her appearance. At first we think that it is the sister of the Turkish major who has escaped, and glance uneasily at him. But he remains calm; and now her companions appear, an old grey-bearded Turkish Pasha, a negress also dressed in silk, two black slaves, and a gigantic negro with an antelope-kid in leash. They have changed steamers in the harbour and are now coming on board. When the Turkish lady sees our curiosity she immediately draws her veil, and the grim negress does the same.

Meanwhile the Pasha has got into a squabble with the steward, who wants his tickets. The Pasha can only speak Turkish and looks round helplessly. We seize the opportunity and crowd round him. And now we silently form in column to create communication between him and the steward. The Pasha applies to the major in Turkish, he translates into French to the sculptor, who renders it in Italian to the steward.

The Pasha has no tickets, but would like to have one first-class, two second-class and three third-class tickets.

Giambaldi refuses to believe his ears. 'Will he travel first himself and let his charming little wife go second?'

'Of course,' replied the major, 'he will travel first himself, the two women will go on to the second-class and the servants stay on deck.'

Out of consideration for the Turkish major we omit to express our surprise too loudly. The tickets are distributed.

'Now,' says Giambaldi, 'we shall have two

Turkish women in the second-class. They will also be shut in, I suppose. It will be a regular hell to be in.'

'He must have great confidence in Christians,' I observed, with a side-glance at the sculptor, 'since he thus ventures to send his women down to us.' The priest shows exquisite amusement and his face is distorted with grins. Giambaldi stares so fixedly at the white Turkish lady that the Pasha notices it, and has her and the negress conducted away by the slaves.

Soon after, a cry is heard outside. We hurry to the rail; one of the boats has capsized in the strong swell; we see its contents, trunks and bags, floating about on the waves. 'It must be the Pasha's luggage,' says Giambaldi. And, in fact, it is! All gather round the Pasha, sympathetic and inquisitive. He stands quite calm; not a gesture proclaims that he is concerned.

Quietly he applies to the steward through us: 'Let me have my money back. I will take the next steamer.' That is all. It is a week till the next steamer goes to Constantinople, and all the luggage is ruined by sea-water. But what is done cannot be undone. Allah is great! He sends a message for women, slaves, negro and antelope, and descends the gangway first himself. The boat awaiting them rocks and dances; it is difficult to get into it. But while he succeeds, for a moment it looks dangerous for his little white lady in silk. She stands shaking on the step and cannot induce herself to jump into the boat. It swings in, swings out, swings in and now she jumps. It succeeds,

and we fancy we see the Pasha breathe more freely.

'It would have interested me to see if he would have preserved his tranquillity if the little woman had gone into the water like the luggage,' says Giambaldi.

'What do you think?' I asked the priest. 'Does not your reverence rather think that it would have been the most favourable moment to convert the Turk?'

The priest folds his hands and revels at the thought.

We hear the windlass go and the anchor is hauled in. Then we stand out to sea, but now it is calmer. The sun silently goes down, we see the Turks on the middle-deck extend their carpets and mats, kneel down and pray. An old priest seems very devotional, he lies long as if doubled up. What is he thinking of? I stretch my neck and see him lying peacefully and picking his nose. Thus has Turkish faith preserved its naïve charm.

The next day at sunrise we are among the Greek islands, steering straight for Hellas, the land of poetry and memories, to the bright peaks and clear air of Attica, to the marble-clad Acropolis.

1903.

ASIA MINOR

I

ON BOARD

ONE may be weary and lifeless, with pale cheeks and lustreless eyes, but when one treads the deck of a ship, or mounts on horseback, the cheeks get colour, the eyes are opened, and the passage of one's thoughts seems to form light and merry circles. Feelings eddy up, bubble, break and disappear like the waves in the ship's wake.

It is the twilight, and our ship is lying quietly off Mytilene. Lesbos has retained its woods from the great days that are gone; the island is as fresh and graceful as a young bride, lit up by the last gleam of day, and it is not difficult to dream oneself back into the far-off ages when Sappho's verses sounded in its groves.

How close together everything is in this part of the world! Smyrna and Sipylos, Phocaea and Clazomenae, Chios and Lesbos! One would think such memories required ample space, and yet in a few hours the steamer travels through it all, and in the middle of the passage the eye can embrace almost all at once. This is not so in Greece proper. One knows that the country is small, and is surprised to find it large, because the mountains divide close together, preventing a general view; and thus one's thought gets time to tarry and comprehend. At the next place the scene is completely changed. The country is large, because it alters its shape, is broken up and divided countless times between Thessaly and Sparta, or Athens and Olympia. In

Asia Minor one expects the distances to be greater, and thinks it an immense distance from the sea up to Sardis ; and yet one gets up there with a little easy day-trip through a quite monotonous landscape.

I had been sitting and developing these ideas to a young Englishman, possibly with rather too much verbosity. He knocked out his pipe, and took so long in answering that I thought he had not understood, and was preparing to repeat my chief points.

Then came the answer with Anglo-Saxon intelligence and pith : 'The impression is still stronger in Palestine. Everything there is so small. For when we read the classics we were young men and knew the limitations of things, but when we read the Bible we were children, and our fancy knew no bounds. Unconsciously we still apply the measure of our childhood to the Bible narratives.'

He filled and lit his pipe. 'Don't you smoke ?'

'No.'

We passed to talking about tobacco, and so on to general hygienic questions. 'It is no use,' said the Englishman. 'He who is born weak, is weak, and will never become like the strong man. He who is born strong, is strong, whatever he does.' The whole way of looking at life characteristic of the British race appears in these words. However, he added as a concession to the weakness of the civilisation he despises : 'Naturally, one can do something for a weak man. He can take care of his own health, and that may do some good.'

The little snub-nosed stewardess, a Smyrniot Greek, comes noisily up to the deck, takes a stool,

and coolly sits down beside us. She has already got out of me everything that interests her concerning myself. Now, without caring about the conversation she interrupts, she requires information about the Englishman's native place and object in travelling, and for this purpose has to use me as interpreter. How democratic the East is. Over there in the first-class naturally it would not do, and that the staff know quite well. Over there the Oriental holds his tongue and waits on the European, because he has much money which he does not know how to use sensibly, and which therefore can be wheedled out of him with some cunning and impudence. Therefore the Oriental bows his back before the man whom in his heart he hates and despises. Here in the second-class we are men, especially if we know a little Greek, and the Oriental treats us as such, shows an unselfishness he will never display over there, but in return claims his rights. Here one sees the waiter, as he pours out the morning cup of tea, bend forward and benevolently ask the elder ladies how they have slept, or whisper a compliment in the ear of a young girl he thinks handsome.

I remember how a Cretan peasant, when I was on the road to Knossos, joined me and began to pump me. When he heard my purpose, he exclaimed with delight: 'Why, that is delightful. I just wanted to see the ruins. So now you can show them me.' For a moment I was rather ungracious. My time was valuable, and I had no particular desire to act as cicerone. But happily I overcame my bad Frankish instincts, and showed him round as

he desired, and if there was something I particularly wanted to see, I asked the man to excuse me, and he sat down on a stone and waited. Subsequently the man treated me to masticha (resin-liqueur) in a tavern and declared himself fully satisfied.

The Frank needs some education before the Oriental can regard him as well-bred. In the first place, he must get out of the habit of contradiction. When a man shows me an island and says it is Lesbos, I hold my tongue, even if I know it is Chios. For I, who live so far away, have no right to be wiser than a man from Rhodes. I can only carry my point in the following way.

'Well, now, that's Lesbos. I declare I thought so, but here in the book it says it is Chios. But that is quite absurd.'

'Is it so in the book?' says the man, with an uncertainty in his voice.

'Yes, but of course it is wrong. If you, who are from Rhodes, say . . .'

'No, no! Rather believe the book. Far be it from me to maintain that its statement is false. It is certainly a first-rate book. Permit me to look at it. See how fine the red binding is. So it says that Chios lies there. And where is Rhodes? There! That is quite right. That is where Rhodes lies. Yes, the man for certain knows also the position of Chios.'

It is amusing to compare the Greeks and the Turks here on board. The first walk boldly, talk loudly and look proudly about them. They know their shirt-collars are clean and the creases in their trousers are fresh, and having from time to time felt their many-coloured ties, they keep up the

dazzling appearance of men of the world. The Turks are shy because their clothes do not fit nearly as well, and they never know what to do with their hands. If you talk to them, they frequently blush. Who would believe that a Turk could blush? And yet the good people hope to enter Allah's paradise. They will require at least a quarter of eternity to get rid of their awkwardness.

Their women are generally more confident and easy in their behaviour. A Turk has constructed a tent on the middle deck for his two wives, and sits in front of the door watching the seraglio. The one woman is ugly and does not show herself; but the other is very charming, and at fixed intervals comes to the door of the tent to breathe the air, just as a little white shining dolphin pops up out of the dark deep. Other Turkish ladies evade the law by being veiled on deck, but unveiling in the saloon, even if it is full of men, under the pretext that they are within four walls. . . . That reminds me of some mourning women at Cairo who were driving in a funeral procession. One saw them raise their right hands in a gesture of mourning and they gave vent to a long-drawn howl; but at the same time they held cigarettes in their left hands, and smoked merrily in the intervals between the accesses of weeping. Thus tradition is observed!

The 'bella donna' of the ship is a little pale Greek from Constantinople. She is like the Empress Theodora in the Ravenna mosaic, and seems, like her, to have reached the virtuous stage, but looks like one who has known better days. She is accompanied by her mother, a beauty now turning grey.

At sight of her, my French travelling-companion exclaimed: 'The mother is as brisk as Martha. Dear friend, if you will play Mephistopheles, I will take the part of Faust.' And without waiting for my answer he began to pay court to the little Byzantine ivory doll, who listens to him as she does to everybody else. She positively makes a collection of admirers: at table she speaks French, Greek, Turkish, and keeps the attention of all, wheedles the first mate in Italian, and makes eyes at the Englishman—a love-song without words!

Leaning back behind her mother she calls out to me in German, and inquires what is the cost of an excavation. I name a few figures, Delphi a million, Delos 300,000 francs, and the excavation is not yet finished. The mother looks at me with mild eyes, as if I had personally supplied these amounts. The daughter calls out the figures in all her languages and creates great interest. Only the mate is sceptical, as a rival should be. He is evidently the favourite. So I turn to the other side, to my Englishman. But that was not the princess's idea. What, give up an acquisition, a man who talks German, and into the bargain a charming young man, who without a moment's hesitation has devoted almost a million and a half to excavations! Never! She tries to smile at me behind her mother's back, but when that is no use, she rises, goes, but stops behind my seat and observes: 'It is not so cold. I shall be upstairs.' All eyes are directed upon me, and I feel that I blush—like a Turk.

1906.

II

HIERAPOLIS

HOW little Asia Minor is known as yet as a country to travel in outside the narrow circle of archaeologists. I ran through the visitors' book in the single little hotel at Gondcheli, which is the starting-point for a visit to Hierapolis and is ten hours' railway journey into the interior, and found scarcely two travellers a month. It can be easily understood that we two strangers, my French friend and I, created such attention that the people at the little stations thronged in front of our carriage to stare at us, and sometimes examined us as to the object of our journey by the help of a Greek or some one who knew French. Thus at Aidin they lifted on to the step of the carriage a handsome little Jewish boy, who with marvellous linguistic ability translated our answers into Turkish for the benefit of the surging crowd. Where there is a long wait the station-master invites us in to coffee or fresh figs. 'What country do you come from?' one station-master asked me. 'Ah, you are a Dane. I am a Hellene, Turkish subject but of genuine Hellenic blood. We took our King from your country because we know that you are of a noble stock. Come in and taste my figs.'

People travel so much in Egypt, which can certainly offer more comfort. But Asia Minor is fresher, more untouched; its population has a wild charm of its own and is still uncorrupted by the helpless silliness of tourists. What a medley of

nations and languages! If one goes into the Square at Aidin on market-day, one sees Greeks, Jews, Armenians, even gipsies, like ravenous birds of prey circling round the poor stupid peasants from the country, Turks, Kurds, Yuruks, Tachtaschids, negroes, to fool them out of their money. In this hubbub Turkish dominates as the common language. There are still Greek villages in the interior where the inhabitants have so completely forgotten their language that the gospel and the liturgy have to be said for them in Turkish. I saw two such 'Greeks' settling accounts in the railway-carriage. They wrote Turkish, but, comically enough, still in Greek letters. Thus religion and writing have a more tenacious life than language.

From Gondcheli it is barely two hours' ride to Hierapolis. He who goes there does not repent it and never forgets it. It is not, in the first instance, the ruins that create the impression, though in size they can vie with the greatest in the Forum at Rome, especially the Thermae and the pagan Basilica. A German expedition has copied the inscriptions and given a poor description of the ruins, but beyond that there has been no excavation or clearing up of the site—fortunately! For now the ruins lie in all their wild lonely beauty between tall grass and oleander bushes, and blocks from the same building have been, as it were, hurled by strong superhuman hands over wide stretches of ground. The lofty plateau on which the ruins lie is several kilometres in length; the cemetery north of the town extends for two kilometres along the road, with tombs of every kind,

some of which are as strange in aspect as Indian pagodas, though they all belong to Roman Imperial times. The Turks call the place Tambuk Kalessi, the citadel of the troughs, on account of the thousands of open sarcophagi. One sees plain traces of tomb-riflers, how with lifting poles they turned the heavy sarcophagus lid on one side to get hold of the valuables buried with the corpse. The lids now lie sideways, almost covered with soil, which shows that the robberies were effected centuries ago.

But, be it remembered, what impresses one at Hierapolis is the calcareous waterfalls. On the high plateau, among the Roman ruins, gushes forth a spring impregnated with lime and carbonic acid heated to 35 degrees, which was famous in antiquity, and made Hierapolis, the 'holy city,' a place of pilgrimage from all parts of the Roman Empire. The spring was dedicated to Cybele, the great mother, and guarded by her priests, who were all eunuchs. At that time the spring gushed forth in a cavern, which was filled with the strong carbonic acid gas, and the priests amazed the travellers by driving animals into the cavern, doves or oxen, according to the pecuniary means of the traveller, and showing how they were instantly killed, while they themselves could go in and out scatheless, probably because they raised their heads and held their breath. Now the spring is in the open air, but is still held in honour, and the bushes round about are hung with coloured ribbons, reminders of the peasants of the neighbourhood who sought and found healing there.

A bathe in the spring is one of the greatest enjoyments one can imagine. One stretches oneself on an old block of marble at the bottom and lets oneself be tickled by the water, which foams and bubbles like champagne. While the carbonic acid instantly begins to evaporate, the lime is deposited slowly in rills, which first run over the plateau and then spread and ripple down its sides. On these are formed the big cascades of lime, in that the water spreads into a gently running stream over the whole cliff-wall, and deposits a layer of lime wherever it goes. Even Strabo describes these waterfalls with admiration, and according to the deposits geologists have reckoned that the spring must have been working for at least fourteen thousand years. One can ascend, between the silent tepid streams of the waterfall, the petrified sides of the cliff, where the water has formed terraces and floors and big basins with high edges, where the dregs ooze over the edge and form patterns of white lime like the finest lace. The whole is like a gigantic fountain conceived and laid out by the gods, constructed during millennia by Nature with such regularity and beauty that human hands under the guidance of a gifted architect could not create a more perfect harmony. Moreover, this cliff-fountain has colours which no human fancy could conceive. The ground colour is the marble white of the lime, so white that the eye is dazzled when the sun shines on it. Where the stream is not so strong, the lime is grey and like granite. Where the water comes less frequently, the lime, marked by sun and wind, glitters in all

colours from the deepest black to red, pale green and brimstone-yellow. The amazement becomes almost greater when one descends to the foot of the waterfalls. Here the volume of water collects again for united effort, and right across the plain, whose vegetation it seizes, encloses and petrifies, is constantly building without ceasing stone channels with high edges. But it is particularly a sight to see what the water does where it meets with inequalities in the ground. There it positively lays out bridges over depressions, bridges in two stories with bold arches like those of a Roman aqueduct.

Alone we wandered the whole day long over the marvellous scene, and in loneliness will these memorials of Nature and men for a long time be permitted to lie. The plateau is too extensive, the blocks of stone too colossal for any one to venture to excavate, clear up or reconstruct the buildings from the debris. And over great parts of the ancient city the lime of the spring has laid a protective covering, which it would be difficult for pick and spade to loosen.

1906.

III

THE PLAIN OF THE MAEANDER

THE horses travel so slowly over the wide plain that there is time and repose for thinking over what we have seen and are seeing. We are coming from the ruins of Miletus, which German archaeologists are in process of drawing out from the covering of

centuries. Where once lay the pearl of Ionia, the chief seat of all its refinement and tender charm, there is now only a miserable village inhabited by the lowest of all the natives of Turkey, gipsies and negroes. Never have I seen such a degraded population, and the people in the neighbourhood have explained the reason to me. In summer the sun burns through the poor mud-walled huts, in spring and autumn they are visited by malarial fever, and when the tide rises in winter it washes all its mud over the streets of the village, and all the inhabitants are bitterly cold in the moist air. All are poor and ailing, and one cannot understand how human beings can stay here at all.

But even if one can get rid of this melancholy impression, it takes much for fancy to reproduce the beauty that has perished. This is chiefly due to the complete change in the ground. Where now are swamps with their black mud and yellow grass, once on a time the waves of the sea melodiously washed upon great marble quays. The magnificent and well-preserved theatre, which is certainly of the Roman period, but lies on the remains of a far older one, only gets its right setting when one knows that an arm of the sea went right up to its stage-buildings, and that its marble steps and circular auditorium faced the water and shone to meet the mariners. Miletus lay on a promontory which with several arms, like fingers of a gigantic hand, projected into the Aegean. The low bank out yonder in the plain, even then a good distance from the sea, was the former island of Lade. In the fifth century before Christ, between it and the

town, was fought the famous sea-battle between the Ionians and the Persians which led to the subjugation and destruction of Miletus. The distress at this disaster was so great in Hellas that the Athenians condemned Phrynichos, who had written a tragedy on the subject. Men were willing enough to behold tragic incidents, to suffer and to tremble, when sorrow and disaster were represented; but there was to be a liberation, a purgation of the soul thereby. The sorrow caused by the fall of Miletus was chilling and oppressive, and that is why they punished the poet, who evoked it once more.

Of ancient Miletus accordingly little has been found; even the graves are destroyed. It is the Hellenistic and Roman city that is appearing, but its outward aspect is also peculiar; for instance, the chief street is thirty metres broad, while generally the streets in ancient towns seldom exceed ten metres. The tidal mud has already formed a thick layer over the ruins that were excavated the year before last, and in a few centuries one will be able to dig out the 'excavation' and estimate its period by the help of layers of mud-deposit. It reminds one of the Nile, and even Herodotus compared the Maeander plain to the delta of the Nile. To-day one would sooner fancy oneself on a Russian steppe, if the mountains north and south, Mycale and Latmos, did not appear veiled in that light transparent mist which is only known to those who have travelled in Greek lands. But it is a pitiful sight to see this good soil lying desolate. Just a few canals would let out the sour water of the marshes and make the ground rich and well cultivated. But

the Turkish Government thinks only of exacting the corn tithe, which in spite of everything is very productive in the few cultivated spots. Agriculture is made difficult by malarial fever, which compels the peasants to build their villages above the plain on the slopes of the mountains and consequently far away from the plough-land. Their cattle are driven by herdsmen out on to the plain, but even they are terribly ravaged by the poisonous insects of the marshes. Hyenas and jackals never lack carcasses.

If by the help of fancy one can picture to oneself the position of Miletus and the happiness of its surrounding country in antiquity, there are instances in which all faculty of reconstruction fails one. Never have I seen anything so melancholy as the ruins of the famous Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, which was once reckoned as one of the seven wonders of the world. In a most loathsome dirty yellow pond one sees appearing separate blocks of stone and a few Ionic column drums partly covered by duckweed. What good is it to know that Heraclitus once lived here and that St. Paul preached in these colonnades ? There is not even the melancholy of destruction in this ruin. The ground is flat, the edges of the pond are green, and birds sing, hop about between the stones, and bathe their wings and backs.

We continue our ride. How lonely and silent it is here ! At long intervals you see a big earthen vessel under a thatched roof, water for the thirsty shepherds, and now and then a Yuruk rumbles past in his creaking wicker cart. He lies and

dreams with open mouth and open eyes; the bullocks before the cart are going by themselves, and he looks neither at them nor at us who ride past him. He is singing to himself in emulation of the creaking of the cart, one sees his lips quiver faintly but hears no sound. Our guide tells us that in his song he is bidding his cart to creak. That is a virtue in a cart, and without it a Turkish peasant will not buy one. 'For how,' says the peasant, 'shall I make the day pass if my cart is mute? But with a cart which sings well the time will never be tedious.'

Night is approaching. The atmosphere which envelops the mountains is beginning to turn a deeper blue. It looks as if blue masses of mist were coming floating round the spurs of the mountains. Soon afterwards darkness settles heavy and menacing over the slopes of Mycale in the north, while Latmos in the south still glitters like a golden temple-pediment on a sky saturated with blue. Never is a southern day so fair as when it is disappearing. One forgets the long blaze of the sun in all the beauty with which it crowns the earth before it departs. Now all the mountains are black, but the great plain is bright and like a powerful mirror gathers the last colours of the day. Its sun-dried mud glitters silvery white; its faded grass is pure shining gold. Under a few wind-swept planes a boy is sitting and singing. We do not see him, but his clear voice sounds as a last greeting to the disappearing daylight. It is a true Oriental melody, monotonous as Nature's own sounds, as the gush of a spring or the rustle of a leaf.

So the last glimmer of light is extinguished, and suddenly it is profound night. Out on the plain the shepherds' fires blaze up, and from the mountains we hear already the short whine of the hyena and the long-drawn howl of the jackal. The horses crowd together and our guide urges them on. Cold strikes up from the moist soil and freezes marrow and bone. But the mountain-side of Mycale, which in the darkness seems so close that with a step one could run one's head against it, constantly retires before us. Then at last lights appear. It is the poor Turkish village of Kelebesch. But anyhow there is always shelter to be found here and food to be got.

1906.

RECOLLECTIONS OF CONSTANTINOPLE

I

THE traveller should arrive at Constantinople by sea from the north, along the Bosporus, with the leafy woods of its shores, the graceful hills and the white palaces hidden in their green gardens. If he comes, as I did, from the south, the disappointment is great. Where the Sea of Marmora ends, the strait is edged by houses, docks, arsenals, which cannot possibly have any peculiar stamp of their own. Even the Golden Horn is merely an inlet of the sea with a prosaic big town. Only Seraglio Point, with its cypresses and the domes and minarets of the mosques, proclaims that we are sailing into an Oriental city.

Perhaps the bad impression was made still greater by the morning mist and chill. It was in October, and the abrupt change from the mild climate of Athens was uncomfortable.

'Where is Yildiz Kiosk?' said I to the young Levantine who was standing by my side on the bridge. Abdul Hamid was then still on the throne, and involuntarily my thoughts had turned to him. She pointed to a height in the background covered by parks and palace buildings. 'Is he popular, your Sultan?'

The young girl looked round and answered in a low voice: 'Our Sultan is very cruel.'

This answer was sufficient to put me in good temper and drive away the first bad impressions. Was it not quite an adventure to sail into a town whose Sultan was cruel? It was no longer Europe with its model rulers, whose first-rate education,

severe sense of duty and parliamentary rectitude were beyond question.

From now on everything I experienced, down to the smallest vexations, was marked by this first sensation of adventure. I enjoyed the nonsense of the passport office, and the greedy eyes of the custom-house officer, and his ostensible zeal in the examination of the luggage, which changed to polite anxiety to oblige and quick expedition when I had put a few piastres into his fist. 'Jürün, arabaschi!' (Drive on, coachman!) I revelled in my first Turkish, while the vehicle jolted through the narrow streets of Galata, with their low houses painted blue or green, in whose taverns a few years since took place the notorious Armenian massacres. Then the street dogs had drunk human blood in the gutters, grateful to the old Sultan, at whose secret command the knives had been whetted. Even the study of the street dogs and their 'beats' was full of mystery. Towards evening one saw the dogs of one district meet in council on an open place or a dung-heap; they stuck their snouts together and howled for half an hour and then parted, strengthened in their consciousness of common aims. Woe to the dog who ventured into a foreign land! It was certain death if he did not escape in the greatest haste. If an Embassy servant led a dog of high breed by a leash through the street, there was a barking of protest, which made the poor alien animal in his terror go as close as possible to the legs of his conductor.

Everything was peculiar in this city: the pavement, often worse than in a Danish country town;

and the big rickety Pera bridge, which was never mended, the tolls going straight into the pocket of one of the Sultan's Pashas; finally, the trams, which were all drawn by horses, because the old Sultan hated electricity. One of his courtiers had suggested to him that dynamite was prepared by dynamo-engines, and after that he permitted no electrical installation. The telephone, too, was rendered impossible; for it could be used to hatch conspiracies. In the tram-car there was a folding-screen with a curtain, which only the conductor might lift. Behind it one heard the gabbling of the women in the harem section. At the stopping-place the folding-screen was lifted off and fixed in another place, so that the women's part was always rather smaller than the men's.

The system for dealing with fires was exactly in keeping with all this. The firemen went out on foot; slender Albanians, famous runners, carried syringes, hoses and other apparatus on long swaying poles, and rushed through the crowd. It was easy to see that a fire in one of the old wooden houses of Stambul with a favourable wind might lay a whole quarter of the city in ashes.

I remember my first visit to the Ottoman Museum at Tchinili-Kiosk. I was to meet the director, but for the time was shown into a small waiting-room, from the window of which I had a magnificent view of the Seraglio garden. A small corner of the actual palace was in sight, with a door crowned by a little stalactite niche, and with a wild vine, red in the clear light of autumn, climbing over the wall. On a bench before the door sat a negro

in turban and fantastic Oriental dress, motionless, holding a scimitar, which rested on his crossed legs. A eunuch watching the door of the harem! For in the Seraglio Abdul Hamid stowed away the women who were too old for him, or whom for other reasons he did not choose to see. Women, who perhaps had only been granted one day's favour, languished here. For even if the Padishah's affection was dead, his jealousy lived. Here sat the negro with scimitar in his lap, in faithful stupidity watching to see that his lord's bidding was fulfilled to the letter. I never afterwards saw this wing of the Seraglio, though I spied from the other windows of the Museum, and I was annoyed that I was not draughtsman enough to put down on paper this unforgettable picture.

Another experience! One day I took some post-cards to a Turkish post-office to have them sent off with Turkish stamps and post-marks. The official carefully investigated the packet and threw three back. 'Jassak!' (Forbidden!) It was a picture post-card with a view of a Turk and some Turkish ladies in national costume. I was annoyed and asked the reason. 'You can send the post-cards from the European post-offices, not from here,' was the reply.

'Why?' I asked defiantly.

With a sigh he let down the pane of glass, and I supposed the matter ended; but soon after a door was opened, and I was beckoned into a little office, where the post-master received me with great courtesy. 'You must excuse it that we cannot deal with these cards, but our lord the Sultan has forbidden it.'

'For what reason?' Involuntarily for a moment the official frowned. Was not the will of the Sultan reason enough for the infidel dog? But then he bethought himself, and solemnly gave me the explanation. 'On this point His Majesty is in exact agreement with the wishes of his people; for the persons represented are not Turks, but Armenians or Jews or others of that sort. No Turk, still less any Turkish lady, would condescend to act as models for such post-cards. Nor can we, therefore, permit them to be scattered over the world with the official stamp of our post.' I bowed and withdrew. There was, in this circumstance, an exalted national morale, a worthy conception, which could not but inspire respect in the more thoughtless Frank.

But I was also to make acquaintance with Turkish immorality. One day I was standing outside the Mevlevi Gate with my map before me, busily engaged in studying the old Byzantine city wall. Suddenly I was surrounded by four Turkish prostitutes in fluttering yellow dresses, who began to dance round me. At the same time I heard laughter from many voices, looked up, and noticed that the windows of a neighbouring Turkish barrack were full of grinning soldiers.

'Bakschisch! Kütschük Bakschisch, Effendi' (A little pourboire, sir), said one of the women.

I felt in my pocket, but had nothing less than a silver ten-piastre piece and thought the sacrifice too great. But it was impossible to force the circle; the women stretched their arms out, and the laughter of the soldiers became wilder. 'There,

you asses!' I threw the silver coin to them, and in a moment with a shriek of delight they disappeared into the barrack. Then I understood that this was a well-organised system of extorting money from tourists, and that the soldiers and the women divided the spoil after loyal co-operation.

Another day I had gone alone into the Jewish quarter of the Phanar. A tall Jewish girl came out of a street door, and spoke to me in German: 'What do you want here? Strangers never come here. What do you wish to see here?'

I took the matter good-naturedly and replied with a bow: 'I come to see you, my fair maiden.'

'Are you an Israelite?' she asked with a slight frown.

'No, happily!'

I should not have said that; for a crowd of promising young Semites appeared behind her, and began to abuse me. I answered back, but the consequence was that they swarmed out into the street and began to pelt me with street sweepings. Soon the whole youth of the street was in chase after me. I tried to preserve my dignity—one does not die the death of a martyr if a lump of filth hits one in the neck—but I was not in good temper. I had gone out in the morning in a spick-and-span white suit, and got back to my hotel in Pera like a spotted hyena.

'The gentleman should not go out alone in this city,' said the porter as he let me in.

I had reason to verify that some days later, when I almost got into a Turkish prison for that very reason.

II

ONE Friday, the sacred day of the Mohammedans, I had gone in an excursion steamer over to the Adriatic side of the Bosporus to see the life of the people in the Valley of Sweet Waters, where the simple population of the city amuses itself in various ways. The little Turkish children ride on roundabouts, drawn by sweating negroes—Europe's diabolical dangerous machinery is not tolerated here!—and in ecstasies of delight stagger on the comical wooden horses, which bear plain witness to Islam's feebleness in sculpture, for they resemble most nearly sea-lions in process of devouring living fish. The ride takes place with Oriental composure; little mother, 'kütschük walide,' has no need to be alarmed. She stands outside in the black-dressed crowd of women, which reminds one of a shy flock of birds, ready to soar away if a hunter or merely a wayfarer approaches.

Out in the grass squat the men, the middle-aged and the old, and listen to the phonographs, which ceaselessly crackle on, singing or telling stories. The real ballad-singer and storyteller with his two-stringed violin is not nearly so successful; the phonograph is taking away his livelihood. Of all European inventions the phonograph alone may look for a great future in the East. All other machines serve only to shorten distances in time and space; for that the Turk, if the truth be told, has no use. To whom is he to telephone out in the world? Why shall he seek for happiness in long railway journeys? But the phonograph beautifies

existence without disturbing the pillars of faith or destroying his soul's repose. Nay, what is more, it has a captivating mysticism. Is it not like hearing Allah's voice to listen to these incorporeal sounds? In truth this is a wonderful and yet edifying reality!

But the young fellows and the soldiers have more turbulent blood; they are dancing in the inns, each race by itself. Most wild of all are the dances of the Albanians, where the leader of the dance puts life into the ring for half an hour at a time, amid applause and contortions and tricks. At last he is pushed aside, not because he is weary, but by the impatience of the others. All the stimulant they have is pure spring water, sometimes with a few drops of lemon juice in it.

In another inn the Greeks are dancing to the tunes of a barrel-organ: there are women with them in the circular dance. Out behind the garden hedge the Turkish soldiers crane their necks, and for a moment envy in their hearts the infidel dogs who can dance with the soft hands of handsome girls in theirs.

I leave the valley, followed for a long distance by a little twelve-year-old seller of flowers, twittering and languishing in the melodious Turkish language: 'Tschitschekler, Effendi! Güllerüm gördünmü?' (Flowers, sir! Have you seen my roses?) When this is no use, she becomes still more insinuating: 'Kütschük bakschisch, Effendi, Ameriqaden en güzel memleket jogdur' (A little pourboire, sir! There is no finer country than America). This last touch of the patriotic strings

I cannot resist. She gets her half-piastre and disappears.

The road goes up through woods yellow with autumn, whose scent and colour with the blue waters showing through is so Danish and homelike. I get up on Jushua Dagh (Joseph's Mountain) and halt, bewitched by a bit of Turkish country life of incomparable peacefulness and charm. In front of me is a little mosque, surrounded by unharnessed conveyances from the farms and houses of the neighbourhood. The horses are grazing in the paddock, the men are inside at prayer. An old peasant, who passes me, points to the open door of the mosque and says, 'Djami' (mosque). There is the same devotional sound in his voice with which in certain ecclesiastical circles at home the word 'church' is uttered; and his look is reproachful and seems to say: 'Ought not you too to go in and pray?'

On the edge of the grass, children are lying—the handsome, gentle, well-brought-up Turkish children, whose behaviour it is always a delight to observe. They are healthy and joyous, without becoming foolish or noisy for a moment. Down below, the women have camped in a dark thickly-veiled clump round a little fire, on which they are roasting chestnuts. I follow their example, purchase some chestnuts at a stall and sit down on the slope to eat them. But they are badly roasted, half-raw and lukewarm, and my gesture betrays my disappointment. Then from the throng of women rises an old beldame; she is unveiled, for her age is great, and no heart can catch fire at the sight of her wrinkled face.

She goes and puts some burning twigs in front of me. 'Put your chestnuts on them.'

I express my gratitude in good Turkish, and she goes back to her place. But at my Turkish speech the children have become attentive, and in a moment the whole troop is camped round me, confidentially chattering and laughing. They have a thousand things to ask and to tell, they are ready to open their little hearts, and the way to a section of the Turkish national soul is ready paved before me.

The tears almost come to my eyes for vexation at my own ignorance. My Turkish is not sufficient either to explain or understand. The children refuse to believe it, and repeat with clear voices what they have said. Particularly, one big handsome lad will not let me go; his eyes shine with keenness. I try in all possible languages, including modern Greek, but in vain. The women below, who have craned their necks in curiosity to hear, fall back into their conversation with a sigh. Soon the children have dispersed. For a short minute I have been a man; now I am once more the dumb stranger. In annoyance I get up and walk on. But the view is so beautiful that I have soon recovered my equilibrium. From Jushua Dagh two roads lead down to Anatoli Kawak, which lies close to the mouth of the Black Sea. I choose the higher road over the mountains, though it leads past a Turkish fort. Only ten minutes am I permitted to walk in peace, when the cry, 'Jassak!' is heard. Three Turkish soldiers break out through the bramble tendrils and surround me. Back! I

protest, but they urge me on. No nonsense! We return to Jushua Dagh, and a young officer is summoned from a neighbouring fort. He smiles scornfully at my narrative of a 'promenade sentimentale,' fine view and Nature's charms. Another soldier is summoned, and the four take me between them and urge me down a hollow way, where one can see nothing, to Anatoli Kawak. On the road they are joined by four more soldiers, and within a square of eight men I enter the country town, where the windows are filled with the curious, who want to see the spy.

I had kept my temper the whole time, and now invited my eight executioners to coffee. They fell into the temptation, and we were just sitting on benches in the inn when an officer arrived and authoritatively called me out.

'Where am I to go?'

'To the Commandant.'

In a big fine house on the shore we ascended a broad staircase to a fine balcony room with a view over the Bosporus and Black Sea. Here the officers of the little garrison were sitting in a row on divans against the walls, each with a fez on his head and a water-pipe before him. An Albanian tschibukti (nargileh-lighter) was kneeling before the pipe of the Commandant. He jumped up, and at his master's order pushed a stool to me in the middle of the circle.

Here was I now sitting on the stool of repentance, suspected of spying on a fortress, among half a score of solemn Turks.

The officer who had fetched me introduced him-

self in French as the regimental doctor, and asked for my teskeré (passport). Through him, the Commandant, who spoke Turkish only, began his examination, which was formally polite, but in reality offensive. It began with year of birth, place of birth, province, followed my schooling, studies and travels to the moment I sat here. There was a certain amusement in hearing the Danish names of parish and province expressed in this Turkish assemblage, which honestly attempted to get hold of the sounds. After the examination the tschibukti brought me a little cup of Mocha, and now I thought the danger surmounted and chattered away. An officer leant forward from the other side and asked if I knew English. I was stupid enough to answer, Yes, though my English knowledge is scanty, and in a moment the situation had altered again. The court was set, and through this officer, the military telegraphist, the Commandant began to put exactly the same questions in the same order of succession.

It became an extremely painful scene. Partly I had difficulties with the language, partly I was not sure that everywhere in all trifles I had told the truth the first time. I had also amused myself by giving the Danish names a Turkish turn. But now they all sat listening, and I understood that they had divided up among them my first answers. At every question a fresh head bent forward listening, to catch my look. The looks they exchanged gave me to understand that they did not think the answers absolutely in agreement.

It threatened to end in a real arrest. Then I

remembered a letter I had on me, a personal recommendation to the French Ambassador in Constantinople. I took it out and passed it to the regimental doctor, and ignored the further questions of the telegraphist. The fog lifted. The polite smiles returned. I rose offended. Now it was time for the comedy to finish. I recounted the places to which they might telegraph to establish my identity. But I would not sit here any longer on a fine sunshiny day. But the Commandant beckoned me to my seat with an authoritative wave of his hand.

'I shall take the next steamer to Stambul,' I protested.

'You shall go by the next steamer.'

The tschibukti brought me a fresh cup of coffee. An hour and a half moved on in Oriental silence. Slowly the dancing sunspots flitted over the carpets of the floor. The air was sweet and dizzy with fine Turkish tobacco. The officers sat dreaming, leaning back; each had resigned himself to his own thought of eternity. I saw the steamer arrive and swing to the quay. I sought the eyes of the Commandant, but they seemed closed. Only when the steamer lay by the jetty did he give the signal for departure. The regimental doctor and the telegraphist rose and accompanied me when I went, politely greeted by the circle. They followed me out on to the quay and stood at my side and heard me take a ticket to Stambul, accompanied me on board, and stayed with me till we arrived at the first stopping-place on the European side.

At parting, the regimental doctor said: 'Never go near Anatoli Kawak again!' And he added

the same words I had heard some days before from the porter at my hotel: 'You must not go about alone in this country.' I took his advice for the future, and thus my exciting adventures were over. But Constantinople did not become a commonplace town—and never will, while the crescent shines over the 'seven hills of new Rome.'

III

THE RED SULTAN

IT was quite clear to me that my only chance of getting a sight of the old bloodhound Abdul Hamid was to get admittance to his Selamlik one Friday, and so I had sent an application from Smyrna to the Swedish Ambassador, who fourteen years ago also represented Denmark at the Court of Stambul. But on my arrival in Constantinople, when on Wednesday I presented myself at the Embassy, it appeared that the matter had been shelved; a contrite attaché drew my letter out of a bundle and confessed that it had not been put forward. I promptly took the petition and demanded an audience with the Ambassador. Thanks to my excellent papers and, in particular, a recommendation from the French Ambassador at Athens, I induced His Excellency to attempt to put the matter through and in spite of everything to get me a permit. In the last resort he would drive there himself and take me with him. 'So be ready on Friday morning at 10 o'clock.' At the stroke of the hour appointed, the cavass of the Embassy entered the

hall of the little Greek hotel where I resided, and called forth great attention. He was certainly a sight to behold : in laced coat, red trousers bagging over long shiny top-boots, which ended in spurs like butchers' knives, so long that he had to turn in his toes while walking. His scimitar was as long and fierce as the sabre which lively boys imagine is used for cutting off heads in Eastern fairy tales.

He presented the Sultan's invitation to me, and informed me at the same time that the Ambassador had sent his own carriage. With the cavass on the box I should everywhere be taken for the Ambassador himself, and so at all the guard-houses on the way the soldiers would be called to arms and present weapons, and I must not forget to salute carefully each time.

It was with a feeling of pride that I leaned back in the cushions of the carriage, for the time being almost the official representative of Scandinavia in the widespread Ottoman Empire. The dogs rushed on both sides when the carriage drove forth ; and away we went, while the seat rocked and danced in its springs over the uneven pavement of the road. What a fine autumn day it was ! Almost northern in its mild coolness and with the yellow leafage in the gardens.

Bom, bommelom, bom, bom ! Anxiously the cavass turned to look at me, but I had already seen the Turkish soldiers stream out of the guard-room and catch up their rifles. A hoarse voice roared a word of command. How extraordinarily different the Turkish language can sound. Twittering as the flute of the nightingale in the little singers at the

theatres: üs, küsküs, klimklüm. Here noisy and blustering as a cannonade: balaklom, brom-brom, saluluk! Under the anxious gaze of the cavass I saluted officer and men in a friendly way, but with not a scrap more condescension than my brief elevation permitted. On we rushed with quivering springs, past beggars and ragged children, past mangy dogs and dirty smokers, whose foul breath struck one in the face. I was reminded of what a man had once said to me: 'There are no places where the well-to-do are better off than in the East and Russia, because the badly-off there are in so much worse a case.'

Again the roll of drums, again the presenting of arms, again the salute. This time the cavass is more at his ease, and does not even turn round.

A flight of doves passed low over the carriage. A herd of goats got in the way, so that we had to drive more slowly. Dogs barked and snarled. In this great city animals are as abundant as in a farmyard. A delight for little Mustapha and little Hassan, who are never so far away from Nature as their small comrades in the rocky deserts of Europe! Even birds of prey come quite close; sometimes a hawk steals a piece of meat from the open door of a butcher's shop.

Now we were at the iron gates of the park, where an elegant officer made the first inspection of our papers. There are two kinds of officers and soldiers, those of the army and those of the Sultan, and they are as different from one another as poverty and riches, rags and luxury. So we went on up to Yildiz Kiosk, no longer jolting on the most

horrible pavement in the world, but on handsome broad gravelled drives, between fragrant garden hedges, in the gaps of which glittered picturesque pavilions. At each ascent the air became purer. We entered a higher atmosphere, where men flowered of a different kind to the marsh-plants of the city. Carriages with fine teams, light greys or brown Arabs, drove past, and in these majestically sat fat Pashas in uniforms heavy with gold and with stupid looks. Earth's elect, not for intelligence or energy, and therefore with borrowed expression and attitude, only by virtue of the Padishah's grace and power! Conspirators bound to do their utmost to inculcate the blessedness of the existing state of things and that the greatness of the Padishah was the will and work of Allah!

The carriage stopped below a long terrace; and after a fresh inspection of the papers, of which the officer on duty had duplicates, I was admitted to the terrace, where about thirty people were collected, half European ladies and gentlemen, half Turks in long black coats and red fez.

The mosque, where the Friday service was to be held, was behind a railing just opposite on a big open space; to the left was the entrance from which the Sultan would appear, driving down the broad walk under the terrace, and turning to the left in through the railings to the mosque.

Now the military band struck up a lively tune, and soldiers of the Sultan's bodyguard began to march past, fine fellows, stalwart peasants from the valleys and ridges of Asia Minor, rocking and springing in their gait to show their strength,

staring at the shining standards with the flying horse-tails which were carried before each section. They entered the square and took up their position round the mosque. Constantly fresh bands, which were playing the latest ephemeral tunes of Europe, but slowly and with an altered rhythm, so that it took time to recognise them ; and constantly fresh files of brown and strong young men. Now the cavalry, too, appeared ; far down on an open spot to the right, also enclosed by railings, moved up hussars on brown mounts, the Ertogrul regiments on Arab steeds. After deploying they were four rows deep, but they did not fill the space at all : the great empty square behind them was originally covered with a mass of people from Stambul, who in former days were permitted from this point to greet the great Sultan. But after an attempt on his life some years ago the public was not admitted any more, but only figured in the gazette reports, according to which His Majesty every Friday as he drove was greeted with cheers ' by the soldiers and the populace.'

There were probably about 4000 soldiers collected, and now came the carriages holding the Sultan's women, every carriage surrounded by half a score of gigantic negroes. In the carriages could be seen veiled and wrapped-up bundles of silk in all possible variety of colours. I counted seven carriages with four in each, thus twenty-eight ladies in silk, whom the old tyrant took with him to church. And how many had to stay at home ? And how many discarded women had he confined in the Seraglio, where eunuchs watched over them

as closely as in the days when the Padishah's favour might shine upon them from time to time. This was therefore Allah's wise arrangement, hundreds of women to one decrepit old man, and four thousand young soldiers, who did not even get the crumbs from the Padishah's table. Was not this incongruity sufficient explanation of the Turkish revolution ? But let us hope that the four women who later accompanied Abdul Hamid in his exile were the oldest and sourest that could be found in the Seraglio.

After the women came the high dignitaries, about fifty fat old gentlemen in gold braid. They went heavily and slowly through the railings and took up their position on the steps of the mosque.

Now finally the time had come for 'the long snake' to appear ; and we strangers on the terrace were busy handing over our umbrellas and overcoats and arranging ourselves in a row, each with a black-coated fez-wearer behind him. Fifteen detectives were summoned to look after the Sultan's fifteen dear guests. Moreover, when the Sultan arrived, we were to take off our hats and hold them with both hands before our stomachs. Finally four officers ranged themselves in front of us near the terrace railing, ready to shoot at any one who took a step forward.

Reverberating horn signals rang out, the bands struck up the Hamidieh March, and the Padishah came driving in a light, closed, hooded carriage drawn by four brown horses, which were led by the bridle by braided Haiduks. After the carriage followed sixteen riding horses of every colour,

beautifully saddled, led by a groom apiece, in case the Sultan would like to ride back. He had not ridden for almost twenty years, but Friday after Friday the horses were taken out in the event of the possibility of his changing his mind.

Then I saw him quite close, the Red Sultan, sitting by the side of his unshapely fat Minister of War. He did not drive like a European king with wife or sons. He was great and alone, apparently without family or kin, and only a devoted official could accompany him in the carriage.

He looked like a strong fellow, with stout shoulders and erect carriage; and the big features of his face with the long grey beard and the huge aquiline nose, that reminded one of that feature in Frederick VI., seemed to correspond. But the colour of his skin was sickly and sallow and his cheeks and temples hollow. A Frenchman who knew him well told me that he was entirely padded, and that on the day he was arrested he appeared, according to the account of the Turkish officers, as what he really was, a shaking, lean, hollow-shouldered old man.

So that day I saw the old Sultan in all his glory, saluting with grand gesture, saluted himself with cheers, which sounded too rhythmical to be genuine, protected by laws and detectives, so that it seemed no harm could come nigh him. But I remember that as I drove away in the Ambassador's carriage I hummed to myself a line of a German student song: '*Ich möchte doch nicht Sultan sein.*'

And now he is dead, lonely, disdained, forgotten.

PALESTINE

I

FROM JAFFA TO JERUSALEM

FROM our steamer, which is anchored off the roadstead of Jaffa, the boat steers in, rolling, as it goes, between rocks white with foam, which lift their heads over the surface of the water between each wave. Out at sea the rowers sang in time to the strokes of the oars, merry little Arab ditties with question and answer, and the whole company laughed when the answer was particularly quick and amusing. But among the rocks they remain quiet, while the steerer at the helm rises and holds his breath; it is a question of making the entrance, narrow as an alley in an Oriental bazaar, when the next wave carries us on. So we go up, forward, inwards; gently we sink; praise to Allah, we are in, and it is time to sing again. . . . In heavy weather steamers can make no call, and the Holy Land may be a week without posts.

Custom house and passport office in Turkey are no longer establishments of torture, where the foreigner must wait for the tedious overhauling of passport and teskeré, and is compelled to bribe right and left to disentangle himself. The introduction of the Constitution has forced a compulsory honour on the wretched employés. Indifferent and with black looks they see the traveller hurry past, following the bare-legged hamál who drags along his trunk.

A moment afterwards we are in the narrow lanes of Jaffa. The air is simultaneously dusty and impregnated with slops, so that it catches the chest

and creeps up the nostrils as in the bazaars of Cairo. Here, as there, Arabs are sitting in caftan and fez or turban in front of small dirty cafés, in which black-dressed men in burnous are drinking black coffee or playing cards with the tip of a nargileh in the mouth. Yet, what a difference! In Egypt the towns were full of noise and laughter, and every other minute one witnessed a fray between the excitable natives, which a few moments after was forgotten by all, even the combatants themselves.

One day in Cairo I saw in one of the side streets an Arab wedding procession go past. First came the jugglers, who did exhibition leaps or cross-capers or balanced long poles on their noses. Then a noisy crew of musicians, who played promiscuously Arab and European instruments, followed the bridal carriage with its occupant, a shapeless bundle of silk, and a series of carriages containing her lady friends, some of them, probably the handsomest, unveiled. In front of the men went a merry old fellow scattering salt broadcast out of a bag.

This is what happened just in front of the steps of the mosque on which I was standing. The old fellow threw a handful of salt so adroitly that it hit a solemn Mussulman among the spectators right in his open eyes. At first there was no help for it but to melt the salt out with copious tears, while the people around laughed loud and offered consolation with the usual 'Mallech' (it doesn't matter). But scarcely had the man recovered his vision before he rushed on, reached the thrower of salt and upset him in the dust. It was equally incumbent on the nearest of the company to come to his friend's

assistance; he seized the first thing that came to hand, a wooden hen-coop in front of a stall, and flung it at the enemy, while the hens, screeching and flapping, fluttered against the bars of the coop. Now it was natural that the shopkeeper should enter the fray to save his hens, and with a bound he was at the throat of the man who had taken the coop. Then followed another of the company, then the hen-dealer's apprentice, one more of the company, two from the crowd, and soon the street was filled with one of the finest brawls that a theatre could offer.

'Mallech,' said the mosque attendant at my side as he calmly put on my leather slippers before I entered the mosque. 'Mallech! Mallech!' said the policemen as they separated the combatants. Even the salt-man, who as bottom of the living mass had got the most blows, rose, and while he vigorously spat blood expressed his placable temper by the word 'Mallech!' On went the wedding procession, up struck the band, and the popular rejoicing began again.

But here in Jaffa everything is so quiet; the character of the natives is sullen and silent, and their eyes seem to presage a storm. Here blood would flow more copiously in the event of a row; it would be an irreconcilable battle, which would not be soon forgotten. Here people are more careful of mixing together; each race has its special stamp, and only those racially related know and salute each other. The motley chaos of clothes and national types you find in Egypt is here quite out of the question. No Jew would wear an Arab burnous or a Turkish fez; Spanish Jews wear hats

and cloaks of black felt, Slavonic Jews cloaks of coloured velvet, and under their rabbit-skin caps long spiral locks dangling before their ears. The Turk is known by his fez, and the Syrian peasants by the coarse short cloaks, which are drawn up over the head and adorned there by two lumpish plaits of camel's hair, a kind of black nimbus, which takes off the edge of a blow from a stone or a stick. Conspicuous among them are the Bedouins from the desert, in grey or white burnous, with almost black physiognomies, in which the eyes glitter like those of young kites.

Even when one comes from Egypt, the neighbourhood of Jaffa seems almost overwhelmingly luxuriant. It is the plain of Sharon, covered with fragrant orange-groves, whose fruits are as large as a child's head and juicier and sweeter than the oranges of Sicily. Only in one place in the South have I seen a like luxuriance, in Conca d' Oro, the wonderful valley which extends before one's eye, with its tangled stretch of olive, orange and mulberry trees, when one climbs from Palermo to Monreale. A strong land wind fills the harbour and the sea far out with the sweet scents from Sharon's orchards. On arriving one is surprised at the fragrant air about the coasts of Palestine.

Higher up, too, the land is very rich. The railway line passes between cactus hedges which protect the fine cornfields; the mould and grass sparkle and make the air heavy with vegetation after rain. It was precisely the rich natural spring rain which made Canaan the Promised Land of milk and honey, equally wonderful, whether one comes from the

West and the Nile valley, where fruitfulness is due to the rising of the river and nothing else, or descends from the deserts behind Lebanon. In the small villages, at which there are stations along the line, the population is more homogeneous and therefore more peaceful. It is Friday, the sacred day of the Mohammedans, and great masses of people gather to see the train pass, evidently the chief event of the day. Smiling men lean on their long shepherd's staves, the women stand in a clump and whisper behind their white face-veils, while the children scream with delight, and when the train has gone on, throw themselves down on the rails to hear the vibrations quivering for a long time afterwards. The most comical little mannikins with red fezzes lie reverentially on their stomachs with their ears against the sounding steel bars and their faces beam with delight.

At a station on the way we suddenly stop after the train had already started. The guard whistles loudly and all hurry to the windows to see what is happening. Soon after a bundle flies out of a carriage. What is he? 'Un cochon monté sans billet!' says the guard. The 'pig' appears to be a Bedouin, who calmly and without vexation is picking up his traps on the green sward. To-morrow the train will be there again; perhaps he will have better luck next time and reach his destination. In any case he will get to the next station, and even if he takes a week, when another arrives in four hours, what does it matter?

Through an endlessly long and dreary valley we get up on to the high plateau of Judaea. The

country is monotonous, gloomy and shielded by great rocks, flat or protuberant, between which here and there is a little sparse corn, reminding one of plots on the heaths of Jutland; while yonder a newly ploughed fallow shows a sign of life. Then follow tracts in which you see only grazing cattle and shepherds' tents; but even there the land is fresher than, for instance, the Greek mountains in spring; light grass is peeping out everywhere. But one misses the characteristics of Greek mountain scenery. The mountain-sides have no lines; everything is grey and rounded, as it were worn away and aged. Through this antique landscape sprinkled with grey, over which rain is again beginning to fall, we arrive, without impressions of any kind, at a yellow station-building which in big black letters bears the world-renowned name Jerusalem.

II

NOTRE DAME DE FRANCE IN JERUSALEM

IT was a piece of great good fortune that during my stay in Jerusalem I was allowed to live in the convent of the French Franciscans, Notre Dame de France, instead of putting up at one of the modern hotels. I was shown to a clean little cell with flagged floor and iron bedstead; on the wall hung a picture of Notre Dame de Ramadour, and another of a saint with pale face and bloodshot eyes, whose name I have forgotten, though the cell was dedicated to him. In the morning the bells in the tower over my head chimed for matins, but not so long that

one could not fall asleep again. Each Friday we fasted at lunch and dinner, and got no meat, but as a set-off mayonnaise lobster or salmon, moreover patties, cakes and fine salads, and it was rather an enjoyment to mortify the flesh in this way.

In the guest-room of the convent my travelling companion and I found a little society consisting of two pious old Belgian ladies, a French doctor attached to the convent hospital, and a genial German Dominican. At first the two old ladies annoyed me by their tearful voices, but their fate was truly tragic; I shall remember them longer than any one else I saw. They had lived quietly with a beloved brother in a Belgian provincial town, and saved money for this pilgrimage for ten years. Scarcely had they arrived in Jerusalem, when their brother fell dangerously ill and had to be taken to the hospital. A few days after they received a telegram to say that their other brother at home had suddenly died without any previous illness. 'God means to try us! Now is the time to be steadfast and faithful!' To them it was no wonder that God chose the moment at which they believed they were doing what was specially well-pleasing to Him, to crush their happiness.

Across their silent grief breaks the rough healthy laughter of the German friar. He is come here to study Hebrew and the topography of Jerusalem with the learned French fathers, but prefers to spend his time in sleep and tobacco. He is a mighty trencherman—he might go straight into a French farce and be sure of a success—and not till dessert does he like to talk of spiritual things.

The first day he examines my orthodoxy by praising the dogma of the Assumption of the Virgin. 'Why should the Virgin Mary die? Death and corruption are only a consequence of sin. But she had not sinned. That I suppose not even Protestants will assert. Well? Then she must have been taken up into heaven.' I stood the test.

But the day after I contradicted him, when he propounded an etymology of the Latin word for heaven, 'coelum.' It was wrong, and I proved it. He frowned. 'It was invented by St. Jerome, a man who knew both Latin and Greek, and had faith in comparison to which all modern science is more fleeting than the smoke of my pipe.' I ventured new objections, but only succeeded in provoking him further. Subsequently he said to the Prior of the convent: 'Hic homo modernus est! Contra auctoritatem sanctissimi Hieronymi dicere ausus est.'

It was stupid. One should never contradict theologians, but merely listen and applaud everything, if one would get any profit from them. The day after he had forgotten his wrath, and talked long about the Egyptians' belief in the immortality of the soul. 'It was remarkable that they had anticipated the idea. Now it is an absolute certainty that the soul is immortal. But at that time it was a fine conception.' Later he discusses the subject of miracles, and relates how he has seen the Holy Coat at Trier perform miracles, for instance, heal a man who had been lame in both legs from birth. I describe to him the miracles I have seen in the Greek church at Tenos, and the

miracles in the old pagan sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros . . . He smiles sarcastically, and at my question, how he would explain them, answers promptly: 'As for schismatics or heathen one should believe nothing at all. One must be on the spot to decide how far it is a case of hallucination or of deliberate trickery.'

One evening we had gone together to the only beer-tavern in Jerusalem, and what with music and Munich beer our spirits had risen high. On the way home we stopped before the new European hotel, and the friar clenched his fist at it: 'It is a den of sin! In its small rooms the most frightful things take place every night . . .'

'How is it possible? Here in Jerusalem!'

'Jerusalem deserves no better than that God should destroy it like Messina. Don't you see the red lantern down there . . . a den of sin! and the blue . . . also a den of sin. Men live and mix like herrings . . . like herrings, my friend! I know it from the porter of the convent. But the worst are the Greek priests and their companionship with the female pilgrims from Russia.'

'Impossible! the Russians are the most pious of all . . .'

'Piety! ha, ha! They are schismatics, my friend!'

'Yes, but all the same . . .'

'And I have seen it, seen with my own eyes. The Greek priests have hired a flat opposite the convent, and I can see all from my window. My friend, I tell you these people live like herrings.'

Of far finer type are the French friars, especially

our convent's old Prior, Père Germer Durand, one of the foremost experts on the topography of Jerusalem at the present day. Close to our own is another French convent, that of the Dominicans, whose Prior is the famous Père Vincent, whose book on Canaan rightly has won great fame in the scientific world. But chief of all is the Dominican Père M——. Externally he is a giant, with a big, long-bearded, somewhat unsymmetrical face, like those of the men of intellect and action who took such a prominent place in the struggles of the Renaissance period. His works on Semitic religion and ancient Crete have given him a name among specialists, and there are few like him among the Catholic clergy. A year before he had written a popular guide to Jerusalem, in which he showed that the tradition of the 'Via dolorosa,' the painful road to Golgotha, was only late, and the road now shown could not be the one Jesus actually travelled bearing the cross. Then the French nuns, who do a business in the stations on the Via dolorosa, complained to Pope Pius and got support. Père M—— received orders to burn the sheets already printed and unsold, and to repair to Rome to do penance. For three months he had to perform the most painful penitential exercises because he had ventured to tell the truth. Why did this proud man humble himself? Because in spite of all he is a priest.

We had him with us for a whole day at Bethlehem, where he showed and explained everything in a complete and severely scientific method. He did not disguise his contempt for all the sacred grottos which attract thousands of pilgrims. On

our return to Jerusalem we went up on to the roof of Notre Dame, and from there he showed us all the famous spots round the city, where Titus had encamped with the Roman army, and where later the Crusaders had lain and directed their attack against the city. Then he suddenly pointed over to the Mount of Olives and said: 'Do you see the ruins over there? They belong to a church raised by the Empress Helena on the spot where the Ascension took place. The facts are established without any question, and we know that Jesus when He ascended first moved in a northerly direction and then turned and disappeared behind the mountain-top there——' We looked at one another, we looked at him, but he did not notice it. The refined and clever man of science had suddenly taken on the soft features of a child and the mild far-away eyes of a mystic.

III

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

NOWHERE does one realise the meaning of Jerusalem in the civilisation of the world as one does in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. I have sat there afternoons and evenings and seen races meet in front of the marble-cased chapel of the Sepulchre, which rises under the lofty dome of the church. The church and chapel are not beautiful; one sees that almost all the building and decoration are due to modern Greeks. From high windows coldly and soberly light falls over the rough bulbous domes

and golden tinsel of the Orthodox Church. The air is bad. Here, where the mind should be lifted above all corruptions, one is tortured by every possible human effluvia : the breath and skin of these motley crowds seem equally unclean. They themselves heed nothing, ask neither for beauty nor hygiene. They lie prostrate on the dirty floor and kiss the stone flags with closed eyes. They throng to kiss the marble-lined walls of the chapel, one after another in the same spots ; the marble is yellow as if rubbed smooth with oil from the lips of thousands. Where one's eye and feeling for cleanliness are equally offended, these primitive people feel nothing but God's presence. One ends by being ashamed of one's notions of civilisation.

Most numerous are the Russian pilgrims, both small long-haired moujiks, and old hunchbacked mothers with motley head-dress. They carry all their travelling belongings in a bundle on their backs, and when they kneel to pray, the tea-pot hanging before their breasts clangs on the stone floor. They do not venture to let go of what they possess for an instant, so great is their mistrust in the world. And no wonder ! For even in Jaffa Greek priests have tried to wheedle out of them their poor pence and belongings. And their own priests are bad enough. It is so expensive to get permission to ring the bells in the church at Gethsemane, but it must be done, for so may the salvation of souls be secured—all night the Russian peasants are chiming over Jerusalem, so that one curses their piety in one's bed. And what strange things the Russian priests sell ! A peasant showed

me a bottle with a black fluid, probably ink, which he had bought from one of the priests. And what was it? 'Egyptian darkness,' which there was something about in the Bible. And it was such a good specific against all kinds of diseases both of men and animals!

It is these devout little Russians that touch one most. They have struggled here on foot, and later packed together on the deck of filthy steamers, they have endured hunger and cold, they have left all at home to shift for itself, with the one thought of their soul's salvation. Now they kneel, weeping, before their goal, the Holy Sepulchre. One looks with rage at the worldly Greek priests, who bob about among them and chatter loudly on other things, while their eyes rest on this or that comely peasant girl—they do not care. Even in the small chamber of the Sepulchre, where the air is heaviest, stands one of these priests and pours water over their hands, while he rattles the money-bag. 'Quick! Look sharp! Out with you!' he says to the old Russian peasant women, whose bright tears are dropping on the marble cover of the grave. They are so full of emotion that 'Kristos, Kristos!' is the only word they can utter, while they sob and kiss every spot inside, and only reluctantly submit to be pushed out by the priest.

But there are many more, many others to be seen. Here come a couple of young Syrians in ragged smocks. They look round at first bewildered; such crowds are unfamiliar to them, and the golden glitter dazzles them. So they turn in inquiry to a priest, who points his finger by way

of answer. There! They fall down together and are wrapped in prayer. Then they take off their battered shoes and humbly and barefoot slink into the chapel through the low door. They come back with their eyes full of tears and dreams, find their shoes by groping as if in sleep, and go out in deep emotion, born again.

If one goes round the church, one finds in almost every corner behind every pillar a black-haired negro-like man in a brown gown with white collar and high cylindrical hat on his head. These are Abyssinians. The Abyssinian monks and nuns, about a hundred all told, have their special quarters in the immediate neighbourhood of the church. This little African settlement in the heart of Jerusalem is very strange. The monks live in rooms which are no bigger than our dog-kennels. The nuns are ugly, but the men are often handsome, and have a peculiar grace in their movements and salutations, which brings to mind the Japanese. If two monks meet, they greet each other with a bow, and then they rub first noses and then cheeks, without this gesture seeming for a moment ridiculous. When they stand in conversation with their hands on each other's shoulders and their heads aslant, smiling and with bright eyes, there is a gentleness and refinement about them which are captivating. Their faith is evidently great. There is a far-off look in their black eyes when one finds them in prayer in lonely corners of the Church.

While Protestantism is almost exclusively represented by bewildered and hurried Cook's tourists, the Roman clergy have their sacred centre at Gol-

gotha. By a staircase in the interior of the church one reaches a fine chapel, where mass is said either by French or Italian priests. Some Russian priests have strayed up, and bowing reverentially listen to the Italian text. It looks both peaceful and tolerant. But behind the apparent everyday harmony in the worship of the same Saviour under the same roof can be traced the smouldering discord. At the entrance of the church is a guardroom full of Turkish soldiers, who with weapons in hand make peace secure among the bellicose Christians. If one goes in in the early morning when the church is swept, one can make some small observations. As the bottom step of the staircase to Golgotha is rather low, it *may* happen that a Greek monk lets his besom slightly trespass. In this case a loud and vigorous protest is made from the top of Golgotha, where a Roman priest sits for that reason on the watch. But on the other hand, woe to the Roman monk who sweeps a couple of grains of dust down from the bottom step, so that they fall on the Greek floor! It is not for nothing that broomsticks are the universal weapons of offence in the frequent religious wars of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. 'It looks ridiculous and contemptible,' a Roman ecclesiastic admitted, 'and yet there is good logic in it. As little as a nation can tolerate a foreign encroachment on its soil because it knows that it compromises its existence by the least concession, so little can we submit to the least limitation of what we possess in the area of the church. For then we should be turned out altogether without much delay.'

Such is Jerusalem, a microcosm, which shows the peculiarities of the Christian world as it were magnified, both the power of faith to elevate and strengthen the mind, and its seed of hatred and discord between man and man.

IV

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

AFTER the rain the land lies in sunshine, freshened as if by a new birth, when the first morning of our stay in Jerusalem we walk out through St. Stephen's Gate across the valley of the Kedron to reach the Mount of Olives. We ascend from the green depths of the valley, past the garden of Gethsemane, where old crooked weather-beaten olive trees bend over two neatly hedged flower-beds, and past the Russian church with its gilded domes, up to the crest of the ridge. We find a place to sit in, from which eastwards there is a view of the grey houses of Bethany between green cornfields, and westwards we have all Jerusalem before us, brightly lit up by the morning sun.

I throw myself on my back, while my French companion takes out the Gospel and begins to read the chapter about Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. How living and intelligible the narrative becomes when we have under our eyes the whole road and the landscape! We see Jesus stop down there under Bethany, we see the disciples find the ass's colt, on which He is to ride in, in front of the door in a narrow passage. Thence the way goes over

the crest of the Mount of Olives down to the Kedron brook in slight windings, and turns away from the broad carriage-road, which now leads to St. Stephen's Gate, and bends—one still sees the traces in the soil—up to the east gate, which the Turks have now walled up, because it would open on to the square round their most sacred mosque. This mosque—Haran-el-Cherif or Mosque of Omar—is on the site where once the Temple stood. In a moment it becomes clear to us, how immediately after the entry, when He was greeted with exultation by the crowds, Jesus has time to visit the Temple and survey the life there, to return on the next day and drive out the sellers and money-changers. It lay just inside the gate; the actual road led to this heart of Jerusalem, long since broken. It does not appear that Jesus went much farther. Into the complex of crooked dirty bazaar alleys, and the broad magnificent colonnades erected by Herod, which we may infer from traces in the soil, the narrative does not in the least introduce us. Only on the Temple square could the crowds of people see and hear Him; if they became too numerous, He went out in the evening, wearied, to sleep on the side of the Mount of Olives or with His friends at Bethany.

While my friend is reading, my eye catches a young Syrian peasant, who is sitting motionless, with placid thoughtful eyes, on the bare ground under a stone fence. His type is not altogether unlike the bearded types of Christ, which Byzantine Art created and we have inherited. It was an art type which Greek Byzantium constructed on the

theme, Christ as the Ruler of Heaven (Christos Pantokrator). Like Thorwaldsen in our day, the earliest Church Art had positively a dislike of representing the suffering Christ. It is the general opinion now that the great statue of Zeus executed by Phidias in gold and ivory in the fifth century, and transported from Olympia to Constantinople, is the basis of our type of Christ. Even when they prevailed on themselves to represent the suffering and humiliation of Christ, his figure in sculpture retained a brilliant purity, one might say elegance, as a legacy of the Greek aesthetic conception of divinity. Even the artists of the early Renaissance or the Spanish painters, who have especially revelled in the representation of the ascetic Christ, gave him well-dressed locks, pure delicate hands, light complexion, and a bright shining garment. But is that correct? It may well be doubted. The man who often spent the night sleeping on the bare earth, who fasted in the desert and went homeless through the country in the inclement weather of Palestine, possessed by the one object of proclaiming His Father's will, the man who has no words sharp enough to blame those who trouble themselves about the petty anxieties of the day, was certainly more like the brown Syrian yonder with the bristly beard percolated with dust and the hard peasant's fists. And would one know the dress he wore, one must have recourse to the relief on the Arch of Titus, which shows the captive Jews in the dress of the time, a short coat and peculiar flat hat on the head. The language Jesus spoke can still be heard; for Aramaic has been

preserved in living speech to this day in three small villages of the Lebanon. But even though we may thus reconstruct the type, the most important point is wanting; the individual features will always be unknown to us.

My friend reads on. We have promised each other to leave all criticism of the Bible at home; but involuntarily we start at the strange story of the punishment of the fig tree, because it does not bear fruit at the wrong season. Then follow the prophecies of the destruction of the Temple and the world. Of the Temple actually not a stone is left; on its site have risen two Turkish mosques and a multitude of chapels and pointed arches of Arab type.

But the prophecy of the end of the world induces us again to forget our good resolution. Here from the slope of the Mount of Olives Jesus speaks of the day of judgement with its prelude of terrors, earthquake, famine and tumult. This will happen while these His contemporaries still live, and yet—the Gospel is first to be preached to all nations. 'Woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.' Why? A flood of questions press themselves on us as we read this mysterious, shifting, self-contradictory prophecy.

Many hearts in generation after generation have believed and expected to see that world pass away whose conduct is but emptiness and vanity. They still live in our days. I knew an old woman in Jutland who sat and waited for the Son of Man to come in the glory of heaven and judge mankind before she closed her eyes.

But others have believed in life, and have refused to see that the world was old and deserved to die. They have worked, and the world is day by day equally young. Before us lies the valley of the Kedron with light green corn, as it has lain every spring for centuries. Down there to the south is the white smoke of the morning train to Jaffa passing by. A new world has been created by the wonderful patience and genius of man, and by action man has preserved his faith in himself and the future of the race.

TUNIS

I

OVER the shop-doors in the bazaars of Tunis very often there is a little rope hanging down, which has a peculiar history of its own. In some of these 'souks,' which are more picturesque and far better lighted than the bazaar alleys of either Constantinople or Cairo, one still finds the door-opening closed by a stone counter, just as in the old Roman shops in the ruins of Numidia. The tradesman, when he wants to enter his own shop, must either creep under the cross-stone of the counter or, by help of a rope fixed to the ceiling, vault in over it. In the majority of Arab shops this primitive arrangement has gone, but the rope is still hanging there, meaningless and unintelligible even to the tenant, a trifle which bears witness to the Oriental's faithful adherence to the old order. This rope is symbolical. Just as one cannot understand antiquity without knowledge of the modern East, so the East only opens out its true nature to him who looks at it with historical presuppositions. It is antiquity crystallised; it is at the same time like a dear old tune which reminds us of our youth, and a witness to human stupidity and want of receptivity, which may have an irritating effect, and to the individual, if it came daily into his life, might be intolerable. But to one who is looking for historical instruction, every detail of the motley life of the people has interest. These houses with their high loggias and flat parapet-fringed roofs are the same as what we find in the Roman mosaics of the Bardo Museum dating from the fourth century A.D.; and the little gold hands of Fatima,

which are offered for sale in all the streets as amulets against the evil eye, are pre-Roman, old Punic symbols, which we find on gravestones at Carthage. Hands are painted on the doors to protect the house, and carried before every Arab wedding procession, made out of wax-candles.

If one views Tunis from the flat roof of the Kasba, what strikes the eye most, after the white domes and the four- or eight-sided minarets, is the yellow marguerites, which grow wild over all the roofs, and peep out in the squares and streets where human beings do not trample them down or mules pluck them up. This vigorous flower, monotonous in colour and shape, is a good ornament for the town, which thus resembles a young Arab clothed in white, who has stuck a nosegay in his turban over the left ear, a sight one may see everywhere.

Under the escort of two native French-speaking Tunisians we visited in the 'souks' a secondary school, a Khaldounia, which is attended by the most promising pupils from the school at the great mosque. That school itself has about 1200 students and contains a library of 12,000 Arabic works; instruction is given only in Arabic language and theology, and those who pass the examinations go out as cadis (judges), imams (priests) or as teachers at the religious schools. Those who want to go further attend the Khaldounia, where between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five they learn French and the various sciences of Europe. When one is told that the pupils are young men already in fixed occupations, who have only the evening free

for lessons, one cannot but admire the energy of the élite of Tunisian youth. The Director of French Instruction, that is practically the Tunisian minister of education, with whom I had a conversation at a ball given by the President, gave high praise to those vigorous youths: in particular, the sons of peasants from southern Tunisia, the neighbourhood of Sfax and Soussa, were excellent subjects of instruction. The Director, whose name is Charlety, maintained that even among the educated youth there was not a trace to be found of the dislike of foreign domination which is so marked among the natives of Egypt; this is not due to the superiority of French government to English, but simply to the fact that from pure love of learning they have no time for discontent. Conversation with natives confirmed this pronouncement. On the other hand, there was in another direction an amusing contradiction between his statement and that of educated Tunisians in the language question. For while they maintained the unity of the Arabic language, and said there was little difference between the written and spoken language, and that a Syrian peasant could easily understand one from Tunis, Charlety said this was a false belief, which was universal among Arabs. Actually, the Arab layman understood neither the Koran nor any other text which was read to him. Recently *Hamlet* had been translated and performed in the theatre at Tunis, which was packed full; but only few, at the most fifty, were able to follow, and even a young inspector of the Arab country schools, who had passed through the Khaldounia, had to admit that

considerable parts of the play were quite unintelligible to him even as regards the language, elegant as the Arabic translation was. Evidently there is in Tunis a linguistic antagonism and fanaticism similar to that in modern Greece, where Queen Olga was long unpopular because she had had the New Testament rendered in modern Greek, though all reasonable people had to admit that no Greek without a classical education could understand the original text.

Under the guidance of the chief physician we visited an Arabic hospital installed in what was originally a barrack of janissaries. The medical men were French, but the administration is in the hands of Arab priests, and the physician described to me the difficulty of getting the orthodox board of management to grant money for European requirements. There had been special opposition to dissection of corpses, but it had been obliged to give way, because the doctors simply declared that they could not heal the living if they were not permitted to look into the dead. The hospital had 250 beds, and every race of Libya was represented in the airy clean wards: what was common to all the patients was the Oriental repose and endurance.

Our walk extended to the old slave-market, where now there is a café. We are now in the country which a hundred years ago was the worst nest of pirates in the world. In connection with our visit, the Tunis newspapers called attention to the connections of Denmark with Tunis from 1750 to 1822, which simply consisted in the purchase of prisoners and bribery of the Bey to give safe-conduct

to Danish ships. If the Bey was annoyed with the paltriness of the presents, he solemnly declared war on the King of Denmark; two days afterwards he concluded peace with the Consul when he had got what he wanted. In 1822, when a Danish Consul died, his wife and daughter were both incorporated in the Bey's harem, and it required both money and long negotiations before they were set free. Here in the slave-market, among the gaily painted pillars, once squatted unhappy Danish prisoners among Sudanese negroes and all varieties of human goods bought or stolen; and when the purchaser came, had to rise, have their mouths examined, and hear buyer and seller quarrel over the price.

The morning walk ended with an exhibition by the snake-tamer Mohammed; in our honour he let himself be bitten by his creatures so that his forehead and nose ran with blood, and the ladies almost fainted.

II

IN AN ARABIC HAREM

THE first visit was paid to the home of a rich notary. The house on the street side presents nothing but a big white wall without windows, and with only one door-opening. After a few knocks the door was opened by a little ten-year-old girl with a pale yellow complexion and big dark frightened eyes: she was one of the household maids; servants are as a rule young children. She was elegantly dressed in a bright blue silk bodice with big sleeves and baggy trousers of the same

colour. Through a long dark passage and a door to the left the visitors entered a square flagged court, with glazed tiles as a narrow plinth to the wall, but otherwise without decoration or plants. There they were received with handshakes by the nineteen-year-old graceful lady of the house. In spite of the numerous noisy strangers she maintained throughout the visit a gracious and dignified calm. Certainly the ladies with their noisy laughter and uproar did not do credit to their nation in this home of an Oriental of the upper classes. They were conducted into a typical Arabic apartment, consisting of a long room with a bed at each end and a deep broad niche, the so-called divan, with fixed wall-benches with cushions and white embroidered covers. Everything was bright and clean, and the atmosphere was good. A table in the middle had two vases of flowers on it and the candlestick-shaped cosmetic pot of chased silver, an offering from the lady's husband. Round the table was a collection of rococo chairs with yellow covers. Several chairs were drawn up by two young maids, and the lady did not sit down till all were seated. On a shelf high up the wall were arranged specimens of beautiful Oriental pottery.

Then the mother-in-law entered, a stout old lady with evident traces of former beauty. She and the young wife went round and in a caressing and insinuating manner felt the materials of the strange ladies' jackets and inquired the price per mètre; they were particularly interested in the fur coats and collars. In return the lady, who, like the rest, wore trousers, showed off her bright blue silk blouse,

and exhibited her splendid under-bodice of gold brocade. That is the most expensive item of an Arab lady's costume; its sleeves stand out from the shoulders like stiff golden wings to make the wide sleeves of the silk blouse spread out. The young lady also proudly exhibited her watch, which pointed to ten o'clock. She did not know the time, and never wound the watch up, but showed child-like delight in this present from her gallant husband.

Now the mother-in-law, the lady and the two maids began to adorn their visitors and paint their eyes. Our ladies are still going about with long dark stripes under and in continuation of their eyes. After the conclusion of this performance amid laughter, the visitors were again conducted over the court and into the salon, which was big and uncomfortable, with mirrors, wall-shelves with vases, four big sofas and numerous chairs. Here sweet chocolate was served on tiny Persian tables in tiny cups, and the two maids danced, while the lady sang and accompanied them on a drum made of a jar with skin stretched over it. The elder of the two girls, who was only thirteen, danced with the sensuousness of an adult. This dancing is learnt by all Oriental women to attract their men when they come home from work. Now the Danish ladies had also to exhibit their dances; so the tables were moved aside, and while an amazed neighbour came on a visit from an adjacent house, our ladies disported themselves in waltz and Boston before the enraptured eyes of the Oriental women.

Meanwhile two of the ladies, with the lady who spoke Arabic as interpreter, had a conversation

with the mistress of the house. She had been married three years, but, to her great sorrow, had had no child. Of the two beds in the other room one is the nuptial bed ; the other is used for lying in, and the little lady of the house had tears in her eyes as she lamented that she had never had use for it. According to Arabic law the husband had the right to divorce her without warning by uttering three words, but had hitherto not thought of it, or of taking a second wife.

When Arab women meet and have admired each other's clothes, and tasted a few sweets together, their conversation is exclusively on female matters. The one thing that fills their little undeveloped brains is love and children. The object of their upbringing is beauty and grace. An Arabic proverb says : 'A man's beauty is his spirit, a woman's spirit is her beauty.' That is the end of the matter. They live in their quiet courts ; they never walk out, but are driven in closely fastened carriages with curtains before the windows. But when the husband is good, and they bear healthy children, they are fortunate in their cages, like pretty birds that have never known freedom.

Afterwards the ladies visited a smaller and plainer dwelling. Here the sleeping-room and the salon were one and the same, but it was attractively arranged, and showed everywhere daintiness and cleanliness, though the visit was a surprise one. The young lady in this house had been married twenty days. 'Ah ! I have got such a good husband,' said she, and showed his photograph. When young girls are married without having seen

their future husbands, and without the slightest knowledge of them, the risk is great, and her words were no mere phrases. She brought out her wedding-dress, which had cost over 1000 francs, the under-bodice alone, 800 ; it was of white velvet with wonderful hand-made gold embroideries. She held it up to the light and let the sun play upon it through the coloured-glass panes. She was not handsome like the first lady, but small and monkey-like, but her movements had the same elegance. During the visit an old man, her uncle, came in to see her. He scrutinised the Danish ladies, and pointed to the best-looking : 'She ought to be married if she is not so already.'

A few days ago, when we visited an encampment of Bedouins, the Sheik took a fancy for another of the ladies, pointed at her, and asked : 'How much does she cost ?' Our chauffeur, who knew Arabic, rushed chuckling out of the tent, especially because the Sheik's two other wives made ugly faces at the prospect of the new acquisition.

I

FIRST YEAR

SHE is only a little girl, so little that her age is given in months. But her world is already richer, and her power greater, than any one would suppose. In the first days of her life the world was only milk and light. When she had drunk, or for a brief hour watched the flickering of light over the ceiling, she was tired and had to sleep. In sleep she could draw up her lips ; and it followed from that that her dreams were peacefully filled with milk, and equally one could think that streams of light ran quietly under the closed lids.

At the burst of spring she went out and from her little carriage could see the most wonderful things. Men glided past, and horses with rocking heads; houses rose and changed colour, their window-panes quickly flashed past. She saw only what rose higher than the rim of her carriage, but deeper down the noise rose up round her. If any part of this shifting mass came too near, a horse's head or a bit of fluttering canvas over a window, she might cry out in terror. But usually it all passed quickly in waves, so that she never really got time to see anything. She merely felt the fatiguing eternal change and had to shut her eyes. But her sleep was not so restful as before. We, too, should soon become tired and should have frequently to sleep if we were transported into a strange globe, where everything we saw and heard was so new and shifting.

When she woke, she was being driven out into

the woods with the young leaves on the trees. She looked up into the green rustling leaves and felt their cool gentle breath on her face. Here she lay quiet and smiled, here she enjoyed the simultaneous movement and rest : always the same green crowns, by which the light was refracted, a rustling unrest, but monotonous as a gentle lullaby. The trees became her first friends, and she smiled in her sleep when she dreamed of them.

But she did not miss them when the leaves had fallen. Now she could sit upright in her little carriage and look down on the ground. Where she had only before seen shadows of things, now she saw the things themselves in their correct dimensions. Long she followed with her eyes the brewer's horses which lifted so high their big weighty forelegs when they moved away. She stretched out her hands to every dog that shot past, and was delighted with the ducks in the park, but, on the other hand, wept when the carriage went on and she lost sight of them. It was her first sorrow of soul.

Life indoors became now just as rich. She crawled round, quick and capricious in her movements. Her little face was directed downwards, and so she saw everything that can lie hidden in a crack in the floor or a fold of the carpet. Threads, which had successfully got through the spring cleaning, needles that had been lost for months, came to light between her lips ; for everything had to be tried with the two small front teeth which in a feverish night she had brought into the world.

Chairs and tables, whose substance and size had

to be examined, taught her to look upwards, and at their sides she made her first attempts to stand up. But more than anything else, flowers attracted her eyes and mind. An 'Ati' she knew at once by its bright colour, and did not give in until she got leave to smell it. If one put a vase of flowers before her, she would squat in front of it for a long time like a little Japanese, bend forward, smell, smile, and lean back delighted in a fresh observation. Colour and scent were united in her consciousness. If she saw a swelling lamp-shade, she cried in delight, 'Ati,' and she might approach a sunspot on the wall and linger before it in the belief that it smelt as sweet as a rose. In the middle of the grey winter she lived in her own little realm of flowers. She knew well that there was another world than that of flowers, but she loved them because they were at once near to her and yet so rare.

Nor did this dream last. It disappeared one day in the second spring of her life when suddenly she stood in a sunlit meadow which swarmed with small flowers of every possible colour. First she tottered a few steps forward, kneeled down, saluted and adored the first flower. But another swayed brightly before her, and a third called equally loudly. There were too many for Sys to continue to be reverential. Too many gods! In momentary anger she tore some flowers from their stalks and flung them away as a protest against their foolish multiplicity. But it was not amusing for long. She lifted her head to watch, and caught sight of a little dog, and, swinging and swaying as one who

had just learned to walk, she trampled over the heads of the flowers to take possession of the new being.

It was the greatest wonder life had as yet offered her. A living creature, active as herself, a joyous puppy, who knew how to play. Superior as it was, it taught her, without her noticing it, the first moral; as it never bit her, however often she put her hands in its mouth, she must of course not pull out tufts of its coat or hang on its ears. The true value of 'Vaps' she only recognised after she had repeatedly made unsuccessful attempts to play with other dogs. Strengthened in her affection she returned each time, and Vaps always generously forgave her faithlessness.

Animals now became her world, as flowers had previously been. Human beings she had always in view, and they were really good and useful enough when she was to have food or be put to bed. But what were human beings compared to hens? They often tormented her with many strange sounds, which they wanted her to repeat. The language of horses, pigs and ducks, on the other hand, took her fancy by its clearness and expressiveness.

Her day was now only nine hours, but dreadfully busy. Not a moment was wasted. If she was tired of seeing and fingering, she crawled five times up into and down out of the garden-seat, or dragged a pole down to the gate and back again until she was ready to drop with fatigue. Her daily work seemed a pure play of strength; her walk was always zigzag, never straight forward, and her work resembled that of the Danaids. It has been said that no punishment would be harder than to

set a man to draw a pitcher full and empty it again, always the same task day out and day in. But to Sys this activity was latent wisdom; the action in itself was indifferent; the object was simply to strengthen the muscles and help the circulation of the blood. We all begin our lives as aristocrats: we work with what we like, and only so long as our body requires movement. The child wants neither to be of use nor to create; that is why it is so versatile.

Thus Sys lives her life in fields and woods, indifferent to what she knows, but quivering with receptivity whenever she meets a novelty. She stumbles in her eagerness and hurts herself, but life has already taught her that the richer the joys the more are the pains, and there is only one remedy for pain, to fix one's attention on something else.

Sys is only very small, but her world is more manifold and her power greater than most imagine. Wherever she goes, big men bow down to her and forget everything to evoke her smile. The other day little Sophie, who is seven years old, came to play with Sys. She had her favourite doll with her; she had had it for two years, and still it looked like new. Sys took the doll and, smiling, threw it against the wall so that the china head was broken. If Sophie's father or mother had done it, she would have felt as if they were breaking her own soul. Now it was only a doll, and a new head could be bought with her savings.

Sys has a mother who in the merry companionship of youth was the freest of birds. No one had imposed hours and duties upon her. Now she is only half free when Sys is asleep; for no one knows

when she may wake. And in the child's waking hours the mother's life is full of constraint and anxiety. But there is no bitterness in the memory of the past, for life is no less worth living than before.

Sys has a father who has only known one object in life, self-development. Now it may happen that as he sits in a smoky great town in one of the big stuffy working-rooms, a breath of summer air and happiness passes over his soul at the bare thought that little Sys is playing and growing up in the fresh air under the broad sky, and that his work makes her childish play easier and more successful.

So great power may there be in a little girl, whose age is still reckoned in months, that she raises those about her out of their selfishness and ennobles them through the forgetfulness of self, which is the root and stock of all the good and beautiful things created by man.

II

SECOND YEAR

WINTER is not an easy time for a little girl in her second year. We seniors are better off. When the streets are full of bad weather and dirt, and sour moisture trickles over roofs and trees in the gloomy days, when one thinks that the air is bad out of doors and also in the room, which the coal-fire penetrates with its impure breath, then we have always memories and songs to console us; a fragment of a tune or a fleeting recollection of a corn-

field billowing under the caress of the breeze suddenly shines up in our minds. We try to hum melodies we have just heard, or old memories emerge from the undercurrent of recollection with their wealth of associations from brighter days that are no more. We do not know ourselves how much we dream ourselves out of the present, how capriciously and indulgently our thoughts draw us out of monotony, break the wall of darkness and chill that surrounds us, and pour out for us the quintessence of the poetry of our lives.

But we understand how richly we are equipped when we notice the little child, which has neither the past nor work with its excitement and expectations to help it over the present. The life of a little two-year-old girl is nothing but realities. She experiences the trifles of actual life with joy or sorrow of a strength which constantly fills us with fresh surprise. She appropriates the home bit by bit, room by room, but when she has finished with it, her greedy little brain demands more material. No one shall cajole her or give her a doll to embrace. She can talk enough to it, but not for long at a time. Her fancy has only room for few experiences, and when she has gone through them with the doll, she has done with it for the time. So she rushes away incited by her thirst for knowledge and her body's need of movement. But the room is full of tables and chairs, whose sharp edges and sides are on a level with her forehead or little red ears. No one thought of her, poor Sys, when the furniture was made and bought. For a few minutes Sys collapses in hopeless tears. When she gets up again, she is

richer by one experience: she is made to rush in wild excitement over broad joyous meadows, clutching at everything she sees. But winter and the room compel her to timorous wariness; the horrid black stove she must not even touch with her finger-tips. Little Sys! Winter makes you old at two years and fills your mind with bitter and painful experiences. We see it by your joy when you get hold of something out of the common, for instance, mother's fur collar. How you can fondle it and call it by the tenderest names you have yourself invented. Sys calls it Apu or A-pho-me-me. To the dust-brush and the carpet-sweeper she applies the same word, which has the melodious euphony of primitive language and changes its meaning constantly. A-pho-me-me, that signifies everything which is rare and amusing and worth playing with. Sys is insatiable in her curiosity every time Mother comes home with a package, and she is the first at the lobby-door when there is a ring. All strangers find her attractive, for she smiles with equal friendliness at every face, merely because it is new, and she is in despair when after two minutes' conversation the milk-boy goes on his way. And yet no stranger can entice her as much as three steps down the stairs. She does not trust them; she has seen them change incessantly, come into her circle of vision, and disappear out again into the air and the sun, where all the people are in constant motion. One cannot build a future on such people. The only people who always come back and are only away for a short time are Father and Mother and Lotte in the kitchen. Those three are real people, who

do not constantly revolve away just as one is on the point of getting to know them. Sys can fall asleep on their laps, and there they are again when she wakes.

Worst are the winter days when the rain is driving along. For walks are generally the chief event of the day. Singing, Sys sits on Mother's arm and lets herself be carried downstairs, after confinement for a day ravenous to clutch at the restless part of existence. At each window nod new splendours; down every stone step she will try to jump. She will not be driven, she wants to run; she feels as if she had strength to run wildly for many hours. But after the varied impressions of an hour weariness overcomes her; she cannot walk any more, and does not want to ride; she is sleepy and does not want to sleep; if she stands still she is cold, and she is too little to walk herself warm. Sadly Mother thinks of last year, when Sys woke and dreamed safely between warm pillows in the cold air of a winter day.

The other bright spot in the winter day is Father's return home. Then begin the wild romps and funny stories, which make the blood circulate and the blue flower of romance unfold before Sys's wondering eyes. Sys was for the first time really unhappy when in spring Father went away for a journey of some weeks. What did Sys understand of weeks? Every afternoon they found her little pitiful figure crouched in the lobby, waiting for Father. She could not believe in his faithlessness, that he like the others was whirled out of her horizon. It was a third part of all human beings

that thus was lost. But when Father at last came home she had already arranged her existence without him, and he was changed into a mythical character whom the others told stories about. Three days later, the afternoon play was once more the fashion ; Father had never been away.

Finally warm summer came, and Sys went to the country with Father and Mother. The journey was like a walk for a whole day, one fresh A-pho-me-me after another. She slept late and poorly at night. Next morning Father took her in his arms and carried her up to the windmill hill to show her the world—the country with the big ranges of hills, and the foaming blue creeks, over which the wind roared. Every bush, every clover-field was a home again. Here in the neighbourhood which was full of his childhood's memories, he rejoiced during the short holiday month to begin life over again in the observations of his child. Down there was the garden where, behind the box hedge, he had played pig-sty as a boy : a pumpkin with four pegs for legs and plaited straw for a tail was the big sow, the little pigs were gherkins similarly arranged. Now they should visit the real pig-sty for Sys to profit by the game.

Father, overpowered by recollections, had forgotten Sys. Now he looked down and found her dissolved in tears. 'Sys down in street ! Sys not be here ! Sys home in dining-room and play !' Father frowned angrily. There sat the little hussy in the midst of the beauties of nature and wept for the street and the dining-room and the little delights of the town.

The tears did not cease when Father took her by the hand and dragged her through the stables. The animals which she loved in her picture-book were big and bad, and would eat up Sys altogether. She would rather touch a glowing stove than the snout of a little calf. Last summer she had rolled about with a puppy and put her hands into its mouth. Now all was forgotten. Winter had filled her with terror of the unknown.

Indoors it was no better. The many people in the big farm-house did not disappear after a hurried view as people ought to, but stayed, and it happened that Father and Mother were quite away among them. Sys was almost frantic at the change in the world. For three days she roared and begged to get back to reality. On the fourth she began to accustom herself to the uncomfortable phenomena of the new existence.

The sea was the first element to which she became reconciled. She would not paddle, not on any account, but one day her bucket fell into the water and Sys ran after it. The wave came and bespattered her, and the ducking amused her. An hour after she was running naked on the beach, with her locks fluttering behind like small coarse flames, now up, now down, a little beaming Anadyomene with a necklace of red coral.

One day out in the meadow Sys found a cow which peacefully allowed her to lean on its side. In amazement she listened to all the cooking and sucking sounds in the cow's inside. 'Yes,' she said, 'Yes, another there. Come at once. Sys's dear friend. Good-bye.' Her eyes shone at the

wise words which came up to her from mysterious depths. The sea and air give her strength to go on with her discoveries while day lasts, and her sleep is quiet and full of images. Summer offers her its inexhaustible treasures, and puts her face to face with infinity. She will make her observations herself, and we do best to look and listen in silence. Life begins from the first in a new creature; it is not Father and Mother's life repeated, but a fresh little organism, demanding place and right for its own development. Life and history know nothing of repetitions; it only seems so to the spiritually weak. True science finds and rests on what is new.

Winter and its limitations may appear forgotten, but attentive observation will show what it has deposited in the soul of Sys. See how she sits twittering and languishing outside the ram's tether. Will he or will he not be a dear friend to her? But when she sees how little he welcomes her overtures, she restrains herself from approaching nearer. Winter's little knocks have weaned her from blind rushes.

With merry delight Sys plays among the many inhabitants of the farm-house, and has a smile and a caress for each. But she will permit no one to hold her long in their arms. If she is weary and wants to rest, then regularly there are only Father and Mother. They are also the only ones who can dry her tears. Thus has Sys appropriated the changing relations of summer, but preserved the deep feelings of winter unweakened in her faithful little heart.

III

THIRD YEAR

'BOY! You mustn't go farther down! You must stay on the pavement, boy!' Little Niels is standing on the flat beach and lashing the sea-water with a branch, and Sys, who is three and much more sensible, is afraid he will go farther and get his feet wet with the rippling water. 'Listen, boy, to what I say! Stay up on the pavement.' It is a town child that speaks. The beach appears to her like an endlessly long pavement. But Niels continues and heeds not her warnings. Then she resolutely takes him by the back of his trousers and pulls. Niels goes back and cries. 'Stop crying, boy! Here is doll-brother for you. Hold him tight, for he is alive. If you will be a dear friend, I will tell you about Cinderella.' She is accustomed to Father and Mother telling her stories to pacify her and divert her attention from this or that. Now she will try the same on Niels. 'Would you like to hear it, boy?'

'Yes!' Niels has dried his eyes, and his mouth is open with expectation.

'Keep hold of doll-brother. He must hear it too, for he is alive and can talk well.' Sys folds her little hands and begins her favourite story as she remembers it, and has embellished it with features of her own invention. 'There was once a little mother who had two small sisters; to the one she was so sweet, and to the other she was so nasty. One day there came a message from the king:

"Won't you come up to the castle and dance with the king?" So Cinderella went out in the garden, where there was a little chirping bird. "Will you not give me a little gown?" "Yes, I will." Pop! off flew the little bird and flung a little gown down to Cinderella. And the little bird flew away to the shoemaker and bought some shoes. And they were very dear, for they cost sixty öre. So Cinderella went up and danced with the king. Then Cinderella ran home with *all* her might. So the king rode round everywhere, but they could not fit the shoe. "Have you not one who can fit the shoe?" "Yes, I have." So the little mother went out in the kitchen and cut off her toes, so that the whole shoe was full of blood. But then suddenly a little head stuck in the door. "Come in," said the king, "you must try." So Cinderella rode with the king up to the castle, and had so much lovely food, and a little bed of her own.'

Now for the first time Sys notices that Niels has long since thrown away the doll, and run along the 'pavement' to fish up a red jelly-fish with his branch. Like a bird Sys flutters up and is at his side, equally with the boy interested in the strange creature revealed by the sea. 'Can he be eaten? Is he alive? Can he talk?' Questions pour from her lips, while she sits and pokes her fingers into the slimy mass. 'Now I have soon killed him,' she triumphantly proclaims. But punishment follows immediately. With a cry she pulls away her hand. 'Ow, ow! he bites! There is a stove inside him.'

Desperate she rushes over the beach up to Father, who is lying taking a sun-bath in the

sand. Father must blow on the red finger, and lick the blister, and pour sand on it. 'I want to go home! There are stoves here in everything.' Yesterday there were stinging-nettles on the bank, to-day the jelly-fish. Sys dares not touch anything. Again a story must help her through life's troubles. With tears still pouring down her cheeks Sys tenderly nestles to Father's side and whispers: 'Tell me about Bovli-bav!'

Father has to tell about little Mads, who watched over ten small lambs and a little green foal out in the meadow.

'Is that the baa-lamb there?' asks Sys and points over the bank. And when this is confirmed, during the rest of the story her eyes rest on the white sheep, themselves the prominent figures.

The wolf devours the lambs, and the wolf devours the foal, and little Mads and his father and mother. Each time one comes and asks after the others the wolf answers: 'Bovli-bav! They are in my stomach! You can get in too!' and swallows him too. Only the cunning puss fools him and rips up his stomach. Out they all jump, and take a terrible revenge on the wolf by sewing big stones in his stomach and throwing him in the water.

'Was it those stones there?' asks Sys, pointing to the big rocks on the shore.

'Yes, those!' And thus the sight of the things illuminates even the darkness of legend. This is history supplemented by archaeology.

This combination of story and reality, which mutually embellish each other, began one snowy day last winter in one of the fine parks of the capital.

Sys had lain on her stomach and been drawn by Father in a little sledge over the white monotonous surface of the snow. When the drive ceased, she got up half drowsy and caught sight of the yellow palace up on the great terrace. In a moment she was awake.

'Such a fine house. Who made it?'

'The King.'

'He is very clever. How can he get so high up?'

'Probably he had some one to help him.'

'Does the King live there?'

'Yes.'

'With Cinderella?'

'Yes.'

'Do they sit and eat?'

'Yes.'

'Can we go in and see them?'

'No, we cannot.'

'Can't the King bear little girls?'

'Yes, but the soldiers won't let us go in.'

Silently Sys sat on her sledge in the wintry waste. Her cheeks burned and her eyes beamed, over her face was the sunny gleam of childhood's dreams. What was it that stirred in the depth of her thought? What would one not give just for a moment to be able to see the old palace with the eyes of a Sys just full-blown. Much we can call up again through a child, but this is impossible, for things to be mirrored with the same freshness and mystic inwardness which are in the first look of the child. In vain we call upon all the forces of the soul: the mind of a child is like a dewdrop, which once broken cannot be put together again.

But from that winter's day this park was the paradise of fairy stories. Here was Cinderella's cottage where she had been so cruelly treated; there in the thicket the wolf watched, while every puss that went past became the actual cat who was the saviour in the story. But Sys was never so far away in dreams that she could not greet the little girls who passed by or play with a party of children. Out here she composed her first song in which all her delight in life is expressed: 'And all the little girls in the street, they say good-day to Sys.' Wherever she goes she has eyes and ears ready. Now it is a street-boy's movements, now a verse of one of the popular songs she catches up. Even echoes of the great events of the country reach her ear. One day her mother found her weeping: 'Oh, I am so sorry that the King is dead. Won't little Cinderella be allowed to live in the palace any more?' She catches up a difficult word and tells everybody that the King lies in 'Castrumlorums[1].' But there are so many hard words for a little girl to learn, and when her parents one day want to show off her cleverness to strangers, she answers, to their amazement, that the King is lying on taxi-motor.

Sys learnt thoroughly what it means to be dead when one day she was out with her mother in the churchyard. The dead man lay in a big hearse and was lifted in under a little bridge. But when they drove back in the tram, the dead man was not there. So when Father one day has to go to a funeral, she confidentially warns him: 'Take care to go in the tram, Father, that they don't bury

[1] Castrum doloris.

you.' She knows also that one may die by crawling up the window-frame and falling out of the window, and one day out at grandfather's grave she says reproachfully to grandmother: 'You should have taken better care of grandpa, and then he wouldn't have fallen out of the window.'

Sys is also so far above the primitive stage that she has a religion. But as she has also been in the Zoological Garden, her conception of the Child Jesus up in heaven is stamped with that idea: she thinks of Him going up over the clouds and back like a little nimble jaguar before the bars of the cage. But she knows how to use Him as her private and anything but humane god of vengeance. One day when she is angry with Lotte out in the kitchen she says defiantly: 'So I shall pray to the Child Jesus to come down and bite your head.'

A year ago Sys was a slave of the present. Now not merely fancy but also memory raises her above it. Even in the gloom of winter she remembers the joys of summer and rides on Father's knee to the land of summer. And when in spring she goes out, she is delighted and ready for everything. Summer is not a time but a country, which lies far away and awaits her with eternal sun, blue lake and green gardens. With the same smile of recognition she will greet the city, the severe dark coast of autumn and winter, which she feels to be the really existent, while the other is Sunday land, where one may only stay a short time.

Such is her world: everything is eternal, and everything alternates like summer and winter. Each day the wolf is thrown into the sea with his

bellyful of stones, but he is always alive and ready to spring on lambs and foals when she bids him. The King dies and is laid on the bier; but rises again and dances with Cinderella and invites her to table. And every day Sys goes out among people and can sing her song about all the little girls who say good-day.

But best and most lasting are Father and Mother. They must share her pain, and without them no joy lasts. The other day a circus company passed the garden hedge. The procession stopped, pierrot made faces, and the band in Austrian uniform struck up. Sys stood outside with Father and leapt and rejoiced to the music. But in the middle of a joyous hop tears burst out. 'Mother! Mother is not seeing the pretty soldiers!' She continued to cry and call for Mother. When the procession moved on, she rushed into the garden sobbing and fell into Mother's arms. Poor Mother, who had not seen what Sys simply could not describe! She wept inconsolably in spite of all Mother's assurances. We had to trundle a hoop in front of her to guide her thoughts into a more peaceful channel.

THE END

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